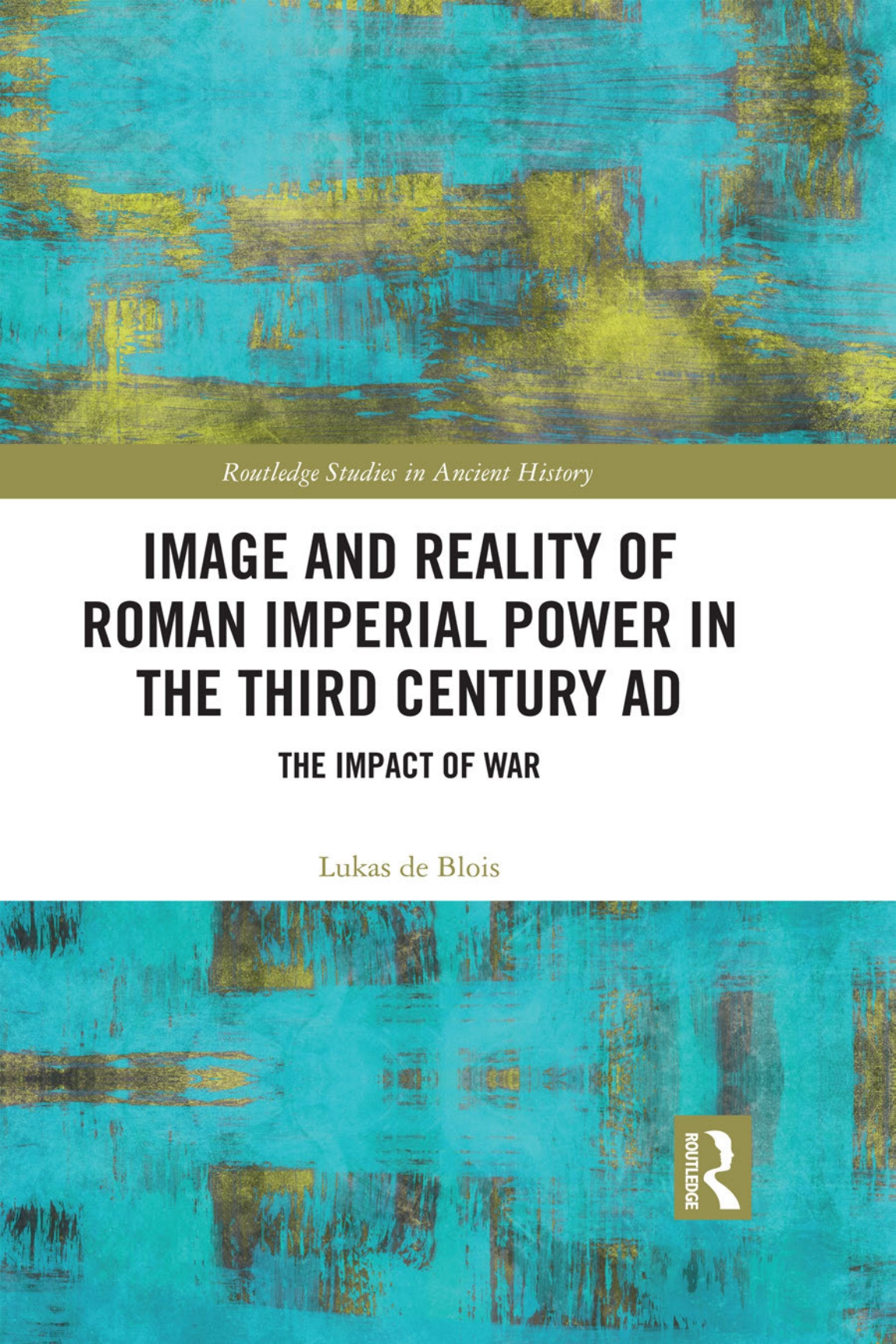




Routledge Studies in Ancient History

IMAGE AND REALITY OF ROMAN IMPERIAL POWER IN THE THIRD CENTURY AD

THE IMPACT OF WAR

Lukas de Blois



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Image and Reality of Roman Imperial Power in the Third Century AD

Professor De Blois, long recognized as a leader in the area of Roman History, has produced an admirably clear analysis of the complex third century AD. The argument is clear and original, the study of how a new, professional administrative class saved a state that had lost direction and imagination will resonate with readers whose interests range well beyond the history of Ancient Rome.

– David Potter, University of Michigan, USA

Image and Reality of Roman Imperial Power in the Third Century AD focuses on the sources of Roman imperial power in the period AD 193–284. It is based on a wide range of evidence, ranging from literary texts, to coins and other artifacts. This volume examines the impact of war on the foundations of the economic, political, military, and ideological power of third-century Roman emperors, and the lasting effects of this. This detailed study offers insight into this complex and transformative period in Roman history and will be a valuable resource to any student of Roman imperial power.

Lukas de Blois is Emeritus Professor of Ancient History at Radboud University at Nijmegen in The Netherlands. He published books and articles on the history of the Roman Empire in the third century AD, the history of the Late Roman Republic, ancient historiography (Sallust, Tacitus, Cassius Dio), Plutarch's biographies, and Greek Sicily in the fourth century BC. He also published a manual, together with Bert van der Spek (L. de Blois & R.J. van der Spek, *Introduction to the Ancient World 3rd edition*, Routledge, forthcoming).

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Image and Reality of Roman Imperial Power in the Third Century AD

The Impact of War

Lukas de Blois

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Preface

This book rounds off a long series of publications on third-century AD Roman history, which started with my *Policy of the Emperor Gallienus* and an article on the emperor Philip the Arabian.¹ The preparation of the present book began as one of the tasks to be done within a research program at the Radboud University at Nijmegen, The Netherlands, which was financed by the Netherlands Organization of Scientific Research (NWO), and took off in 2004. Colleagues within this program or connected with it were Olivier Hekster, Martijn Icks, Erika Manders, Inge Mennen, and Danielle Slootjes. The title of the program was *Image and Reality of Roman Imperial Power, AD 193–284*. The title of the book I am presenting now is slightly different, *Image and Reality of Roman Imperial Power, AD 193–284: the Impact of War*, which expresses the strong influence of wars upon Roman third-century history. As it is, the book gives the reader an introduction, an up-to-date survey of third-century AD history, which focuses on the many wars that Roman emperors and their assistants had to wage, and three chapters on the consequences of wars and crises for the sources of Roman imperial economic, political, military, and ideological power. The book was organized along Michael Mann's theories about sources of power.

I wish to thank my colleagues at the chair of Ancient History of the Radboud University at Nijmegen, The Netherlands, particularly Olivier Hekster, who kindly read through my manuscript. I owe thanks to the Netherlands Organization of Scientific Research (NWO), Brasenose College, Merton College, and Christ Church at Oxford, UK, the *Seminare für Alte Geschichte* at the universities of Münster and Heidelberg, Germany, and the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome. I owe thanks to the Ancient World Mapping Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC, USA, especially to Lindsay Holman, for producing my maps. I am grateful for the stimulating discussions I had with colleagues from several countries who visited the workshops of the International Network Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, 200 BC – AD 476), which I had the privilege to preside over from 1999 to 2006.

Lukas de Blois
Nijmegen, The Netherlands
January 2018

Note

1 De Blois 1976 and idem 1978–1979.

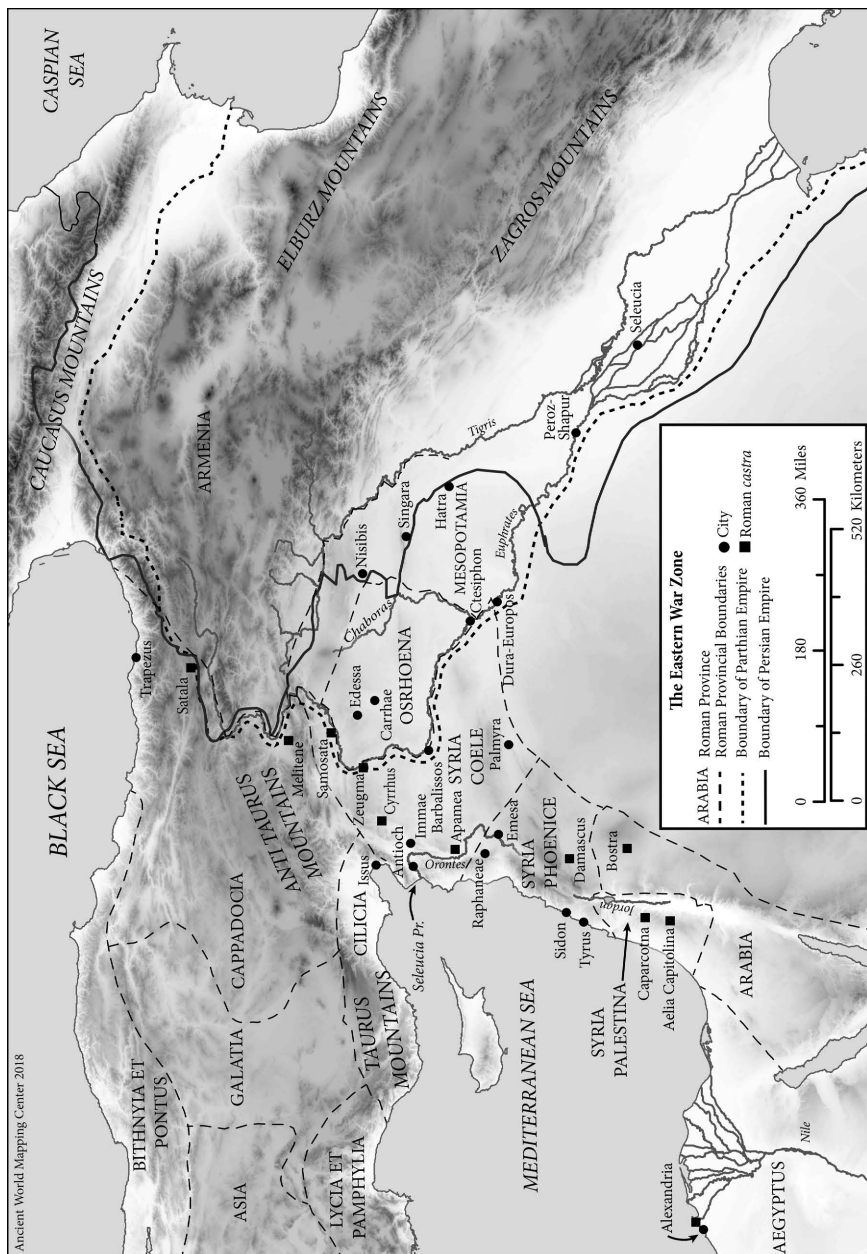
Abbreviations

AE	Année Épigraphique
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AJAH	American Journal of Ancient History
AJPh	American Journal of Philology
AncSoc	Ancient Society
ANRW	W.Haase & H.Temporini, eds., Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt (Rise and Decline of the Roman World), Berlin/New York 1972–
BASP	Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists
BCH	Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique
BGU	Aegyptische Urkunden aus den staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden
BJ	Bonner Jahrbücher
BRGK	Berichte der römisch-germanischen Kommission des deutschen archäologischen Instituts
BVBl	Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CE	Chronique d'Égypte
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
CJ	Codex Iustinianus
CPh	Classical Philology
CQ	Classical Quarterly
CRAI	Comptes Rendues de l'Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres
CTh	Codex Theodosianus
Dig.	Digesta
DNP	H. Cancik & H. Schneider, Der neue Pauly, Stuttgart 1997
EA	Epigraphica Anatolica
FGrHist	F. Jacoby, Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker
FHG	K. Müller, Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum
FIRA	S. Riccobono, <i>et al.</i> , Fontes Iuris Romani Antejustiniani
GRBS	Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies
HA	Historia Augusta
HE	Historia Ecclesiastica

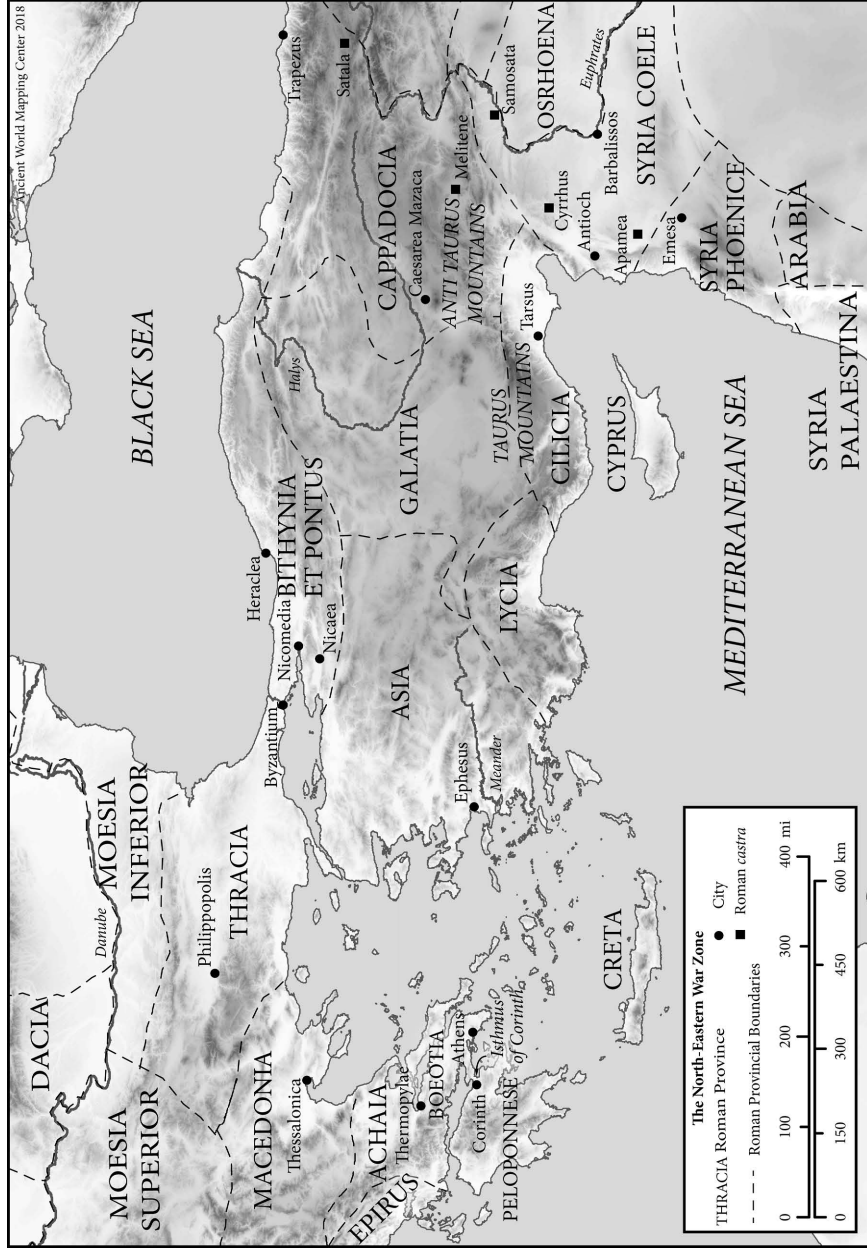
HSCPh	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
HTbR	Harvard Theological Review
HTbSt	Harvard Theological Studies
IG	Inscriptiones Graecae
IGBulg	Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae
IGR(R)	R. Cagnat, <i>et al.</i> , Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas pertinentes
ILS	H. Dessau, Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae
JBAA	Journal of the British Archaeological Association
JJP	Journal of Juristic Papyrology
JRA	Journal of Roman Archaeology
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
MBAH	Münstersche Beiträge zur antiken Handelsgeschichte
MEFRA	Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome, Antiquité
NC	Numismatic Chronicle
OGIS	W. Dittenberger, Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae
P. Dura	C. Bradford-Welles, <i>et al.</i> , The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Final Report V 1, The Parchments and Papyri (1959)
P. Fay.	B.P. Grenfell, A.S. Hunt, D.G. Hogarth, Fayum Towns and their Papyri
P. Mich.	University of Michigan Papyri
P. Oxy.	B.P. Grenfell & A.S. Hunt, <i>et al.</i> , The Oxyrhynchus Papyri
P. Ryl.	C.H. Roberts & E.G. Turner, Catalogue of Greek Papyri in the John Rylands Library (1911–1927)
P. Yale	Papyri Yale University
PIR	Prosopographia Imperii Romani, 1933–
PLRE	Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire
PSI	Papiri Greci e Latini. Pubblicazioni della Società Italiana per la Ricerca dei Papiri Greci e Latini in Egitto, Florence 1912–
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum
RE	Pauly-Wissowa, Realencyklopädie der Klassischen Altertumswissenschaft
RGDS	Res Gestae Divi Saporis
Rh.M	Rheinisches Museum für Philologie
RIB	Roman Inscriptions of Britain
RIC	Roman Imperial Coinage
RSA	Rivista Storica dell'Antichità
SEG	Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum
Sylloge	W. Dittenberger, Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum
TAM	Tituli Asiae Minoris
TAPhA	Transactions of the American Philological Association
TAPhS	Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
VA	Vita Apollonii
VS	Vitae Sophistarum
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik

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Courtesy of the Ancient World Mapping Center at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, USA; made by Lindsay Holman.

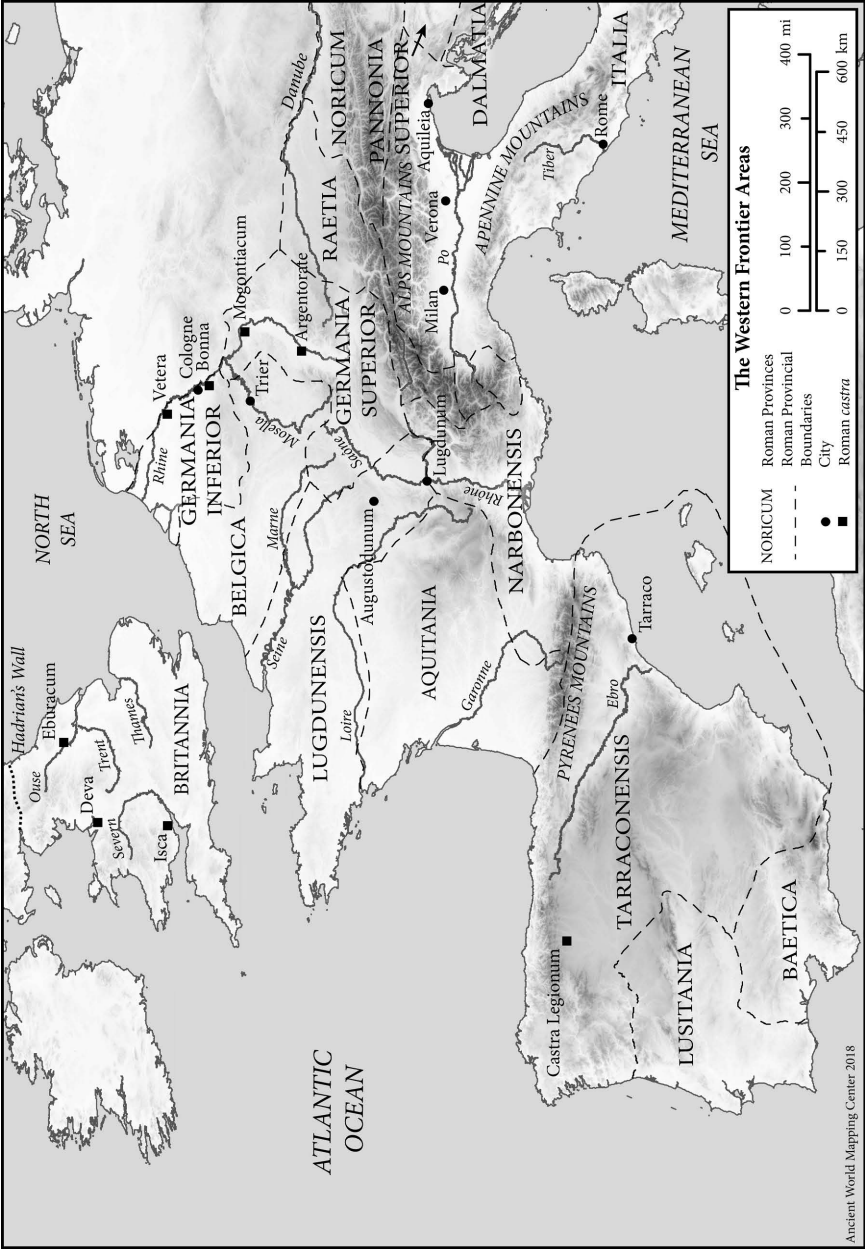


Map 2 The northeastern war zone.
Courtesy of the Ancient World Mapping Center at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, USA; made by Lindsay Holman.



Map 3 The eastern war zone.

Courtesy of the Ancient World Mapping Center at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, USA; made by Lindsay Holman.

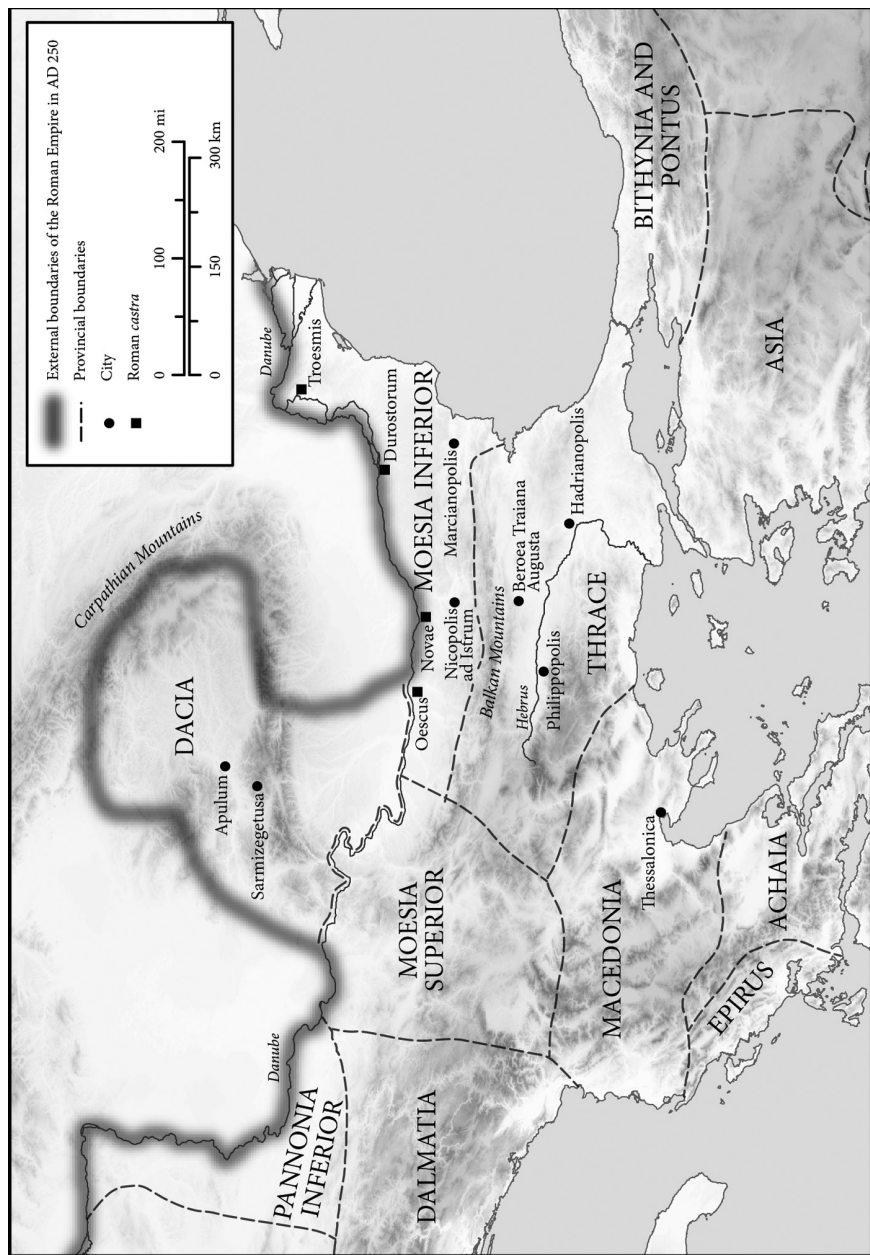


Map 4 The western frontier areas.
Courtesy of the Ancient World Mapping Center at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, USA; made by Lindsay Holman.



Map 5 The Upper and Middle Danube frontiers and northern Italy.

Courtesy of the Ancient World Mapping Center at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, USA; made by Lindsay Holman.



Map 6 The Balkans war scene in the third century AD.

Courtesy of the Ancient World Mapping Center at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, USA; made by Gabe Moss.

1 Introduction

This book focuses on the sources of Roman imperial power in the period AD 193–284. More specifically, it researches the impact of war on the foundations of the economic, fiscal, political, military, and ideological power of third-century Roman emperors. This century, full of difficult wars as it is, is suitable to research this impact of war. Chapter 1 gives an introduction to the Roman empire about AD 200, a section on concepts and definitions, a survey of the available sources, and a concise *status quaestionis*. Chapter 2 contains an up-to-date survey of third-century AD Roman history, which is useful in itself but is also needed as historical background for the following chapters. This chapter comprises four sections: one treating the period AD 193–230, another one describing the escalation of wars and invasions from 230 to 249, a third one analyzing the crisis of the Roman empire (AD 249–268), and a last one discussing the military recovery of the empire (AD 268–284). Chapter 3 concentrates on the erosion of economic and fiscal sources of imperial power and the manner in which emperors tried to repair the deficits. Chapter 4 focuses on military and administrative developments, and on the networks that supported imperial rule, under the impact of war. Chapter 5 discusses changing foundations of imperial ideological power.

1.1. The Roman empire about AD 200

This book treats important aspects of the history of the Roman empire in the period 193–284 AD. By the end of the second century AD this empire stretched from Britain to the river Tigris, and from the fringes of the Sahara to the Rhine and Danube regions and the Black Sea. By then it may have counted about 50 million inhabitants, which admittedly is a supposition based on reasoning, not on hard evidence. Egypt, Italy, Gaul, and Asia Minor were the most populous regions.¹ The city of Rome was a metropolis of about 800,000 inhabitants, by far the biggest city of the empire.² Supplying Rome and the standing armed forces necessitated a permanent logistical structure to get food and commodities from various parts of the Empire to the capital and the border armies, and this structure, added to a long-standing network of trade routes, brought into being a system of regular exchange and traffic.³ Cash money (coinage) was important in all kinds of transactions and above all to pay the military. The supply of money

2 Introduction

was dependent on the availability of precious metals, the extent to which those metals were used as money, and how hard money was made to work.⁴ The Roman empire was a fairly urbanized society with high levels of trade and exchange, but we should not see it as a modern society; the empire was and remained a predominantly agrarian society, in which most economic activities had a local or regional character. The economy of the Roman empire was a network of local and regional economies. We should not see it, however, as the primitive ancestor to the medieval world. On the contrary, on a number of important indicators Rome clearly surpassed anything that would follow in the Western world until the industrial revolution.⁵

The empire's population was differentiated into social and ethnic groups. The higher orders consisted of senators, *equites* (knights), and decurions in the many local communities in the empire, practically all of whom were landed proprietors.⁶ At a lower social level lived free farmers (tenants and independent small-time farmers), professionals, urban workers (either independent craftsmen or day-laborers or combinations of both), slaves and freedmen. Income that facilitated consumption between bare bones subsistence and respectable consumption levels was earned by 'middling groups' and poor but not miserable households, and sustained most of local production and exchange, and the selling of some imported goods. A numerically small *élite* consumed much more individually than anyone else, but for numerical reasons fewer local products than the middling groups did.⁷ At the bottom of the social pyramid were the slaves. Slave society was structured hierarchically, there were huge differences between members of the imperial household and slaves in a quarry. It seems that in the third century the proportion of slaves and freedmen in the population was declining.⁸ Ethnic groups existed in the various provinces, but the higher orders were connected by a common Graeco-Latin *élite* culture, particularly in the older, inner provinces. Latin and Greek were the dominant languages of the empire but, in some regions, such as the eastern provinces, other languages were admitted into documents too.⁹

At the end of the second century AD the Roman empire was governed by the emperors, their apparatus, provincial governors and procurators, and *potentes* at the local level in Italy and the provinces.¹⁰ A Roman emperor was what he did¹¹ but also what he appeared and was perceived to be.¹² Emperorship was an ideological construct, an image as much as actual reality. At their accession emperors had to secure acceptance by the armed forces, the people of Rome, and the senate, which was the only body that could legitimize imperial successions by handing over to the successor the formal powers and competences that his predecessor had had. This was as yet no mere cipher. The contemporary author Herodian says that Gordian I in North Africa in 238 only had the name and outward image of an emperor, not the substance, which only changed after senate and people of Rome had received his program of government in a letter, and after the senate had accepted him as lawful ruler.¹³ Roman emperorship had, right from the start of the Principate, a hybrid character: it was monarchical but was formally based on a combination of republican competences, such as the *tribunicia potestas* (competence of a tribune of the *plebs*) and the *imperium*

proconsulare in the imperial provinces. At every succession, the senate handed over this combination of powers to the new emperor.

The emperor personified Rome. According to Herodian 1.6.5, Rome is where the emperor is.¹⁴ Wherever he arrived, he was received with pomp and state, an imperial *adventus* being quite an event. By the beginning of the third century, the emperor was seen as exempt from the laws, but his spouse was not. In *Dig.* 1.3.31 Ulpian argues: ‘The emperor is freed from the laws (*princeps legibus solutus est*);¹⁵ although the empress, admittedly, is not freed from the laws, emperors nevertheless grant her those same privileges, which they themselves enjoy.’¹⁶ Official imperial messages had the force of law.¹⁷ Living Roman emperors did not pretend to be divine, and were not venerated as such, but they certainly had super-human associations.¹⁸ According to Legutko, in the third century the Roman emperor was already an ideological construct independent of the person who was on the throne.¹⁹ He may be right but there is room for some doubt. In Rome at least, dedications to the emperors were always to the rulers personally, not to them as holders of the office.²⁰ In 2001 Carlos Noreña published an excellent short summary of the ideological position of the emperor. He says:

The Roman emperor served a number of functions within the Roman state. The emperor’s public image reflected this diversity. Triumphal processions and imposing state monuments such as Trajan’s column or the arch of Septimius Severus celebrated the military exploits and martial glory of the emperor. Distributions of grain and coin, public buildings, and spectacle of entertainments in the city of Rome all advertised the emperor’s patronage of the urban *plebs*, while imperial rescripts posted in every corner of the empire stood as so many witnesses to the emperor’s conscientious administration of law and justice. Imperial mediation between man and god was commemorated by a proliferation of sacrificial images that emphasized the emperor’s central role in the act of sacrifice. Portrait groups of the imperial family were blunt assertions of dynasty and figured the emperor as the primary guarantor of *Roma Aeterna*. Public sacrifices to deified emperors and the imagery of imperial apotheosis surrounded the emperor with an aura of divinity. An extraordinary array of rituals, images, and texts, then, gave visual and symbolic expression to the emperor’s numerous functions and publicized the manifold benefits of imperial rule. From the *clupeus virtutis* awarded to Augustus to the Panegyrics of the Later Empire, a broad current of imperial ideology ascribed these functions and benefits to the emperor’s personal virtues. The imperial virtues, moral qualities possessed by the ‘good’ emperor, were also represented visually in a range of official media and systematically communicated by the Roman state to the subjects of the empire.²¹

Roman emperors were aware that wielding power was inextricably connected with the representation of power. Right from the start of the Principate the emperors had a privileged access to the means needed to manipulate images of imperial

4 Introduction

power all over the empire. The images of the emperor and his family were ubiquitous. The emperor appeared on coins, in statues, in paintings throughout the cities of the empire, and was prominently present not only in and on the great civic or religious buildings but also in more humble shops and inns.²² The emperors and their assistants developed a symbolic language of images.²³ In broadcasting images of themselves, emperors were not completely free to do whatever they liked. On the contrary, in all media they used they were under constraint of traditions, although they could adapt their messages to personal preferences and contemporary situations.²⁴

Loyalty to the emperors was cemented and expressed by the imperial cult. Throughout the empire, people built altars and temples to *Roma et Augustus*, where deified deceased rulers were venerated. This cult was hardly homogeneous; it was, rather, a patchwork of Roman and local phenomena. The cult was integrated with other celebrations and the buildings connected with the imperial cult often occupied strategic places within the built environment of the towns.²⁵ The imperial cult should not be seen as a monolithic and single entity, but as a complex phenomenon composed of different, locally adapted cult practices.²⁶

The emperors showered not only their images over their subjects, but also messages in texts, for example by inscribing texts on their monuments and publishing rescripts to petitions.²⁷ About AD 200 Roman imperial administration was mainly based on the principle of petition and response, not on political views or bureaucratic top-down rulings. Roman government reacted to problems brought to its attention rather than initiating activities on its own accord, the main exception being premeditated military campaigns.²⁸ Responses contained in rescripts had validity everywhere in the empire, not just to the communities that had handed in petitions. According to Boudewijn Sirks, the rescript system was an elaborated form of imperial patronage, the emperor, the great *patronus*, lending his aid to his empire-wide *clientela*.²⁹ The system was fairly successful, for provincial loyalty was the rule rather than the exception, which was strengthened by the 'imperial habit,' the tradition of obeying the Roman magistrates. Through this method of petition and response Roman emperors contributed to creating consensus and acceptance, and were constantly communicating with local communities, which for example honored and acclaimed every new, succeeding emperor through embassies, receiving back the confirmation of existing privileges and the award of new ones.³⁰

The emperors were assisted by their *consilia*, which were informal groups of friends and advisors, composed of the most important senators and *equites* of the day,³¹ and by *officia* that were led by *equites* and comprised experienced imperial slaves and freedmen who belonged to the *familia caesaris*.³² The important nucleus of powerful men who assisted the emperors, either in their *consilia* or otherwise, were, together with the emperors themselves, the most important career-brokers.

The emperors regularly consulted the senate. Advices of the senate (Latin: *senatus consulta*) had force of law but normally came into being on the basis of imperial letters or orations. The senate counted 600 men, most of whom served

the emperor as magistrates, governors, and priests. Most senators were wealthy or even extremely rich landed proprietors, owning estates in Italy and the provinces.³³ Senatorial careers followed certain patterns. They started with junior senatorial functions in Rome or in the armed forces and were subsequently composed of old magistracies of the traditional *cursus honorum*, with governorships in provinces and other top-level functions intertwined. The highest magistracies they could reach were the city-prefecture of Rome and the proconsulates of the provinces Asia and Africa. Their most important status-marker was still the consulate or, even better, a second consulate at the opening of the year together with the emperor.³⁴

Equites had since the beginning of the Principate served the empire too, in military as well as administrative functions. Their *ordo*, the *ordo equester*, was a heterogeneous group of tens of thousands of men, of whom only a small minority served the emperors. The other *equites* were landed gentry, merchants, bankers, or intellectuals. Within the political system, the most significant subset of *equites* were those who served as equestrian officers in the armed forces, and senior administrators. Junior *equites* served as military tribunes of legions and as prefects of cohorts and cavalry units. In the second century AD, the post of *advocatus fisci* became an alternative precursor of an administrative career.³⁵ Later in their careers, which equally followed certain patterns, *equites* could serve as provincial procurators who were responsible for financial administration and military logistics, and supervised freedmen procurators who administered imperial properties. *Equites* could also be imperial secretaries (heads of imperial *officia*) and governors of minor provinces. The highest functions they could reach were the governorships of the provinces of Egypt and Mesopotamia (after AD 195), and the posts of *praefectus annonae* (head of the corn supply of Rome) and *praefectus praetorio* (commander of the praetorian guard, and simultaneously one of the most important advisors of the emperor).³⁶

The provinces were ruled by governors, most of whom were senators who during their careers could be sent to provinces to serve one or two years, seldom longer. Some provinces, such as Egypt, the Alpine provinces and the new province of Mesopotamia, which in AD 195 had been established by Septimius Severus,³⁷ had equestrian governors, most of them being high-status knights who had a long career behind them. Every governor who did not have to fight invaders or other enemies made a tour through his province, turning up at given locations at fixed times of the year, in order to hold court and receive petitions. In towns where they arrived they were solemnly received with honors and acclamations.³⁸ In large, developed provinces a multitude of petitions were usually handed in. In the Arsinoitic nome the prefect of Egypt Subatianus Aquila, who had come to Egypt in AD 206, once received 1,804 petitions in one day.³⁹ Provincial governors were assisted by their own *consilia*, by a small staff of slaves and freedmen, and by a few soldiers who had been seconded from the armies. Senators, and most of the *equites* who served the emperor, were not specialists, but all-rounders who were well-versed in juridical and literary *paideia*. The specialists were of a lower status level.⁴⁰ The actual power of a

governor surpassed his formal competences if he had a good relationship with the ruling emperor, had a strong position and high status within the Roman aristocracy, and had good connections with local communities in his province and with the most powerful provincial aristocrats. Many governors were honored with statues in provincial communities.⁴¹

Taxation was an important aspect of Roman imperial governance. Tax money was needed to pay the armed forces, the court, imperial representation, imperial building policies, and bread and circuses in Rome. In the provinces there were land and poll taxes (*tributum soli* and *tributum capitis*), based on census lists, indirect taxes, custom duties, and taxes on the movement of goods (*portoria*). Among the so-called *vectigalia* that were to be paid by Roman citizens were a 5 per cent inheritance tax (*vicesima hereditatum*), a tax on owners who freed slaves (5 per cent on the value of the slaves), and a 4 per cent tax on selling slaves. In the later Augustan era there was also enacted a 1 per cent sales tax.⁴² There was no uniform system. Indirect taxes, for example, differed from region to region and from province to province. Most taxes had to be raised by local magistrates, under the supervision of imperial procurators or equivalent administrators. It seems that under the Principate taxes were comparatively low in the Roman empire, much less than 10 per cent of GDP till the last decades of Antonine rule.⁴³ However, surpluses after deduction of necessary costs, such as seed corn, raw materials, means of transport, feeding animals and remunerating workers, must have been small as well, in many cases not more than 20 per cent.

In one of his publications Richard Talbert concludes that most provincials' lives remained centered on their own community, and their normal tendency was to regard neighboring communities as rivals. Only when seeking to grasp their world well beyond home they were likely to think in terms of their own province, the provinces contiguous to their own, and the others that comprised the whole empire. The only bodies representing one or more whole provinces which Rome encouraged were *concilia* or *koina*, and their limited agendas were the preserve of no more than a very select group of top-class delegates from local communities,⁴⁴ who – incidentally – came nearer to Roman upper-class governors than anybody else in the provincial communities, which could lend them a chance to go over into the emperor's service.

Government and jurisdiction at the local level were mostly done by basic local *potentes*, decurions or *curiales* who were life-members of town councils and owned estates in the neighborhood (and eventually elsewhere).⁴⁵ According to Peter Brunt, hardly any class of men rendered more important services to the Roman state than those charged with local government.⁴⁶ Municipal government had to operate within the rules and frames of central and provincial government but had not lost all freedom of action. According to Graham Burton, the main impact of the imperial state and its agents was not to constrain, but rather to reinforce and underpin the actions and decisions of local magistrates and councilors. Intervention by provincial governors should normally be understood as responses to requests from local authorities. This was one aspect of the continuous dialog between local notables and the imperial and provincial rulers.⁴⁷

Local notables fulfilled (unsalaried) municipal magistracies, discharged the various *munera* (obligations), acted as local benefactors, and represented themselves and their families through works of art. Urban landscapes accurately represented local and supra-local hierarchies.⁴⁸ The raising of taxes was one of the most important tasks of local government.⁴⁹ Other obligations that local notables had to meet were billeting of soldiers, caring of their animals, lodging of traveling officials, maintenance of the road system, maintaining order and safety in the town and its surrounding countryside (*eirenarchy*), and providing means of transport to officials and military (*angareia*).⁵⁰ State transport depended to a large extent on private sector resources, which were bound by obligation and compulsion to the state.⁵¹ The rewards to local magistrates and councilors of raising taxes, fulfilling obligations, and keeping towns and their countryside safe were Roman citizenship, status, and legal privileges.⁵² Patronage was important to many Italian and provincial communities. Patrons could be members of the ruling dynasty, senators, knights, rich regional proprietors with widespread connections, famous intellectuals, and Roman military cadre. Patrons provided 'their' communities with a range of benefactions, such as legal services, access to the court and the senate, mediation in times of conflict, civic buildings, infrastructural works, altars, temples, and celebrations.⁵³ Emperors every now and then honored communities by taking up local offices, to which they appointed substitute office-holders (often equestrian prefects with military backgrounds).⁵⁴

The armed forces were an important element in Roman imperial administration, and the mainstay of Roman imperial power.⁵⁵ To many inhabitants of the empire the armies were the most visible and concrete representation of imperial power. Military installations and buildings, the imperial guard, other troops, fleets, and militarily tinged works of art brought home the majesty of Rome to anybody who saw them. Even landscapes were changed after large concentrations of troops had pitched permanent camps.⁵⁶ Numbering about 300–400,000 men, the armies and fleets comprised not even 1 per cent of the empire's male population, but a much higher percentage of males between 20 and 45 years of age.⁵⁷ On thinly populated regions that heavily contributed to the armed forces, the impact of war and recruitment must have been strong.⁵⁸ The armies at the borders consisted of legions and *auxilia*. From Augustan to Severan times the number of legions had risen from 25 to 33, and more specialist auxiliary forces had been created. From the times of Marcus Aurelius field armies were not only composed of entire legions and their *auxilia*, but mainly of detachments from several legions, to which useful auxiliary units and allied non-Roman troops were added. The armed forces in Italy, which could act as the emperor's reserve army, had from the days of the emperor Augustus consisted of the praetorian guard, *equites singulares*, the *vigiles*, urban cohorts in Rome, and the imperial fleets at Ravenna and Misenum. The armed forces had their own rituals of identity and of loyalty to the emperors.⁵⁹

The political, social, fiscal, and economic impact of the armed forces was great.⁶⁰ Roman armies were vehicles of social mobility. There was no other place in Roman

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society where men who were not at all *honestiores* could become centurions through imperial patronage, and then *primi pili* (the most important centurions), and subsequently enter an equestrian career.⁶¹ With Roman armies came administrators, taxes, and requisitions in cash and kind,⁶² traders, permanently residing veterans, relations between local notables and Roman military cadre, and chances of upward social mobility for municipal gentry via military careers.⁶³ Permanent military camps, for example along the river Rhine, created markets and a kind of 'business class.'⁶⁴ A great deal of the state budget went to the military, in one way or another.⁶⁵ Officers and soldiers not only received regular pay but also handouts at special occasions, bonuses, and rewards for good behavior.⁶⁶ The armed forces were supplied through state coercion and free trade.⁶⁷ The legions and other units which were stationed along the river Rhine were fed and supplied by its direct hinterlands and northern Gaul, but attracted also traffic from other regions, even from Spain (olive oil, *garum*, and sour wine).⁶⁸ Roman Britain had to support three legions and their auxiliaries. Troops at the Upper and Middle Danube had at their back their own direct hinterlands and north Italy. The forces in Dacia and at the Lower Danube could not completely be supplied by their own territories and hinterlands, but needed imports from Asia Minor and Greece as well. Roman units stationed in North Africa, Egypt, and at the eastern borders were supplied by their own regions and hinterlands.⁶⁹ These are only rough outlines; all armies attracted traffic from elsewhere. In 216–217 Egypt, for example, had to contribute to the logistics of Caracalla's field army in Syria and Mesopotamia.⁷⁰

As was pointed out above, field armies were made up from detachments taken from border legions, with auxiliaries. Despite its size, the permanent army of the Roman empire was too small to launch major attacks or counter serious attacks and invasions with the soldiers from only one particular frontier garrison. Mainly as a result of repeated warfare, the logistic support for the thousands of soldiers in the field armies and for those marching across the empire to combat zones took on more institutionalized forms including the development of buildings and infrastructure in the interior of the empire.⁷¹

Marching armies were more of a problem than standing ones. Standing armies stationed in *castra stativa* at the frontiers had a positive function in the stimulation of trade and crafts, and produced commodities themselves, but marching troops tended to take more than their due and did not produce anything. Irregular levies and requisitions by marching armies could have a significant short-term impact on local communities. This probably outdid the positive effect of spending military pay in the regions they passed. In the third century wild requisitions became more regular, and became arguably one of the most visible aspects of Roman rule and of the impact of the army on provinces.⁷²

The Roman army was a legal class within the empire. *Miles* was a legal term as well as a simple descriptor of a soldier. Once a soldier had taken the *sacramentum*, his oath of loyalty, he was considered part of this legal class.⁷³ However, Roman armies were not isolated blocks in society. From their camps they traded with surrounding areas and regions further away, they attracted people

from various regions in the empire to the frontier zones to trade with the soldiers and produce for them, they founded *canabae* (neighboring towns where veterans, artisans, and business men settled, and met all kinds of local and immigrated people), they influenced people living around, and had cultural and religious interaction with their hinterlands. Just one example. As Oliver Stoll has demonstrated, the favorite god of the *legio III Cyrenaica*, Zeus Ammon-Serapis, became in due course a local god of Bostra, where this legion had been settled by the emperor Trajan. Before they had been in Egypt, where they had adopted this god as their favorite deity.⁷⁴

From the days of Marcus Aurelius onwards, military service was even less an agreeable way of life than before. Soldiers could very well die of diseases, hunger, and combat actions. As Michael Speidel points out, it was more like *dolor* than anything else, and many soldiers were mainly motivated by the prospect of *honesta missio*.⁷⁵ This must have had a negative influence on recruiting good military personnel at a relatively low price.

1.2. Power, ancient and modern

Power is not an unproblematic category. As Jaš Elsner rightly observes, it is rarely limited to the pure exercise of brute force, but is a far more complex and mysterious quality than by any apparently simple manifestation of it would appear. It is as much a matter of impression, of theatre, and of persuading those over whom authority is wielded as it is something tangible.⁷⁶ One of the most frequently employed definitions of power was formulated by Max Weber, who describes power as the capacity of an actor within a social relationship to impose his will. In Weber's theory of state power, a quintessential concept is the monopoly of violence that is connected with legitimacy.⁷⁷ An equally frequently used definition is to be found in the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*: power is the capacity to influence the behavior of others, the emotions, or the course of events.⁷⁸ In other words: power is a measure of a person's ability to have other persons do something that they would not otherwise do, to control the environment around, including the behavior of other people. Michel Foucault sees power as a complex strategic situation in a given society. His concept of power involves both constraint and enablement, and a bundle of 'technologies of power.' Foucault outlines a form of covert power that works through people rather than only on them, for example when more and more people in a society start to accept that beliefs and notions are common knowledge. In this way societies work through cooperation, not through coercion.⁷⁹

Power is connected with status, leadership, and authority. Successful leadership may enhance someone's authority, which in the long run may lead to a higher status of a complete family, not just of one person. High status, in its turn, gives somebody an excellent starting-point to gain more power. Authority is not the same as power. It denotes either the power to give orders and enforce obedience, or the ability to influence others on the basis of high descent or recognized knowledge and expertise.⁸⁰ Social status is generally seen as the honor

or prestige attached to one's position in society.⁸¹ In the Roman Empire, as in other state formations, social status could either be earned by achievements or by being placed in the stratification system by an inherited position. Combinations of the two regularly occurred.

According to James MacGregor Burns, leadership is the reciprocal process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers.⁸² In Burns' view, there are two main types of leadership: transforming and transactional leadership. In her excellent short summary of Burns' long chapters about these two types of leadership Gerda de Kleijn says:

When goals of leaders and followers are connected but separate, and their relation only a matter of mutual profit based on reciprocity, leadership is called transactional. This form is different from transforming leadership, which assumes that whatever the separate interests persons might hold, they are presently or potentially united in the pursuit of 'higher' goals. It implies that the term 'transforming leader' has moral and charismatic connotations.⁸³

If a leader is exercising transformational leadership, he will be able to bring about changes without too much negotiation or interference by groups and individuals, whereas he really is dependent on such negotiations when his power will have descended to transactional leadership. This may happen, for example, when powerful groups start to lose confidence in a ruler's legitimacy, effectiveness or invincibility. Such a decreasing adherence to ruling governments may also cause military coups and other uprisings.⁸⁴

Power manifests itself in a relational manner; it always has to be contained in an organizational form, it is never free-floating.⁸⁵ One cannot meaningfully say that a particular social actor 'has power' without also specifying the role of other parties in the social relationships involved. These parties may accept someone's power because of his overwhelming lead in weaponry but also because of his superiority in status, dynastic potential, merit, behavior, quality of leadership, and actual successes ascribed to good luck that was supposed to be based on piety and blessing by higher powers.

What are the sources of power? David Potter seems to think that revenue and manpower are the main parameters of power, as Romans of imperial times saw it, and measures their power along such lines.⁸⁶ In my view this approach is too narrow and one-sided. In discussions about sources of power Michael Mann's theories are important. In this book his concepts of economic, politico/military, and ideological sources of power are used as a guiding principle in arranging the argument, and organizing chapters and sections. To his economic sources of power I add fiscal ones. In a volume dedicated to Mann's theories, Philip Gorski rightfully remarks that Mann's *Sources of Social Power*, published in 1986, may be considered one of the most ambitious works of historical sociology to appear during the last 30 years in which this branch of sociology has enjoyed a

remarkable renaissance.⁸⁷ On one of the first pages of his *Sources of Social Power* Michael Mann says:

A general account of societies, their structure, and their history can best be given in terms of the interrelations of what I will call the four sources of social power: ideological, economic, military, and political relationships (IEMP). These are overlapping networks of social interaction, not dimensions, levels, or factors of a single social totality. They are also organizations, institutional means of attaining human goals. Their primacy comes not from the strength of human desires for ideological, economic, military, or political satisfaction but from the particular organizational means each possesses to attain human goals, whatever they may be.⁸⁸

Positions of power have to be propagated and communicated to all groups and regions in society. This is called representation of power. Representation is a process through which people construct the world around them; it presupposes rituals and adaptive ways of looking. Rituals – as well as other ritualized standard practices – are an integral part of any representation of power. In all rituals and comparable ritualized standard practices symbols and slogans are quintessential. They condensate a rich diversity of feelings and meanings⁸⁹ and are seen by many people, coming from different social levels and various regions. Their way of looking at imperial representation involves learning to interpret existing relationships of power.⁹⁰

Imperial power in the Roman empire of the years AD 193–284 is not the same as state power in the modern world, but developments in power relations and the representation of imperial power in a third-century AD Roman context may offer analogies and equivalents to the working of power and its representation in the modern world, and useful material for analyzing the workings of power in general, in various social and political contexts. The Roman world was not that much different from ours that any comparison would be false or impossible. The Roman Empire of about AD 200 was a complex, multicultural society with a differentiated social structure, a variety of culturally, socially, and economically differing regions, standing armed forces, a personal bureaucracy of the emperors,⁹¹ uniform standard political and administrative procedures all over the Empire, a generally shared literary élite culture – in Greek as well as Latin – and rituals connected with emperor worship.⁹² The city of Rome was a metropolis of about 800,000 inhabitants. Supplying Rome and the standing military forces necessitated complex structures of extortion, transport, and distribution. The Roman empire was, in short, not a loosely connected bundle of totally differing, incomparable, almost entirely agrarian, tribal regions. The Roman imperial administration was certainly not comparable with modern bureaucratic government but was not primitive and completely oral either. In the Roman empire government was very often government by letter. Emperors, governors, and provincial procurators communicated with each other in writing, and so did emperors and cities. To petition the emperor or a governor or another representative of Roman authority individuals

had to travel to the place where those persons were, but handed in their requests in writing and received written replies that they could take home, to publish them at frequented places.⁹³ The central, provincial, and local governments possessed archives.⁹⁴ If there are thus enough analogies and equivalents between the Roman world of the Principate and the Western world of modern history, and the Roman empire was not that different to make any comparison impossible, it is justified to take Mann's concepts of economic, political/military, and ideological sources of power as a guiding principle in arranging the search for foundations of Roman imperial power, and consequently as a tool to organize this book.

The main economic source of power of Roman emperors was their access and entitlement to money, food, bullion, commodities, and services, which they actualized through taxing the population of the empire in cash or kind and requisitioning services and extra commodities when necessary. On their own ever-increasing domains they could raise additional foodstuffs, materials, and labor services. These domains contained not only farming land but also mines and quarries, and were controlled and administered by the *familia caesaris*, slaves, and freedmen of the emperors. In the third century also freeborn men could be appointed to functions in the administration of imperial domains.⁹⁵ Other sources of imperial means and economic power were booty, inheritances, windfalls ensuing from political strife, and irregular requisitions.

Political power in the Roman empire was – as in modern societies – Weber's monopoly of violence⁹⁶ as well as the authority needed to raise taxes and irregular levies and impositions in money or kind, in an extraction-coercion cycle.⁹⁷ To administer the empire, manage the military, and enforce all kinds of levies, which they needed to supply the armed forces, their own court, the administrative apparatus, and the city of Rome, emperors relied on networks composed of members of the higher orders (senators, knights, and local gentry), a personal bureaucracy consisting of their own offices in Rome or at any place where they resided, imperial slaves and freedmen in the provinces at imperial domains or mines, and military personnel. Military personnel of various grades were integrated into the imperial administration.⁹⁸

Sources of the ideological power of Roman emperors were acceptance by the military, the bureaucracy, and the higher orders in society, added to a permanent potential for victory, divine associations, strong dynastic claims to the throne, and the authority to spread images of themselves and their power all over the empire, and determine the contents and character of texts on coins and monuments as well as the wordings of rescripts and other imperial messages.

1.3. Available sources

The main sources of our knowledge of the period under discussion are literary texts, inscriptions, images, and legends on coins, papyrus texts, sculptures, other archeological findings, and juridical texts such as the *Digesta* and *Codices* in the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*.⁹⁹ When using historiographic literary texts, we should realize that many of them have a senatorial bias. They are

written by senators or authors from senatorial surroundings. Other literary texts may have been written on the basis of doubtful sources, which makes it equally necessary to use them with care.

*Literary texts*¹⁰⁰

For the study of the period AD 193–235 the last ten books of Cassius Dio's *Roman History* are a quintessential source of information. Dio may have written his voluminous work between 194 and the time of his death, after 229; so in his last ten books he was a contemporary writer, an eye-witness of many things he wrote about. Dio was a Greek as well as a Roman, a senator from Nicaea in Bithynia, an insider in Roman politics who was acquainted with emperors and other powerful men as well as a cultured Greek author of the period of the Second Sophistic.¹⁰¹ It is thought that Dio was born about the mid-160s, and spent time in Rome from 180, where he was quaestor about 189, praetor in 194 or 195, and *consul suffectus* shortly after 205. When in Italy he spent his time either in Rome or at Capua, where he owned a villa.¹⁰² Under Septimius Severus Dio belonged to the *amici Caesaris* and probably to the *consilium principis*. Macrinus ordered him to be a *curator* of Pergamum and Smyrna, and under Severus Alexander he was more actively involved in state administration than ever before; c. 223 he was proconsul of the province of Africa but then held posts that were less distinguished, probably to help the emperor Severus Alexander. From 224–228 he was a *legatus* in Dalmatia and Pannonia Superior, where soldiers caused him trouble (AD 228). In their opinion he was too strict (Dio 80.4.2). Because of reports from Pannonia the praetorians in Rome started to consider Dio as a *persona non grata* and saw to it that he had to spend his period as *consul iterum* together with the emperor, the summit of a senatorial career, outside the city of Rome. The emperor could not spare him this humiliation (Dio 80.5.1–2).¹⁰³ Dio saw the Roman empire as a worldwide *polis*, the *urbs Roma* serving as the *astu* and the rest as its *chora* (52.19.6).¹⁰⁴ In keeping with this view is his proposal to give the cities of Italy and the provinces less latitude and to embellish the city of Rome as a showcase of Roman power (52.30.1ff.). Dio emerges from his work as an advocate of monarchical government, in a fixed hierarchical order in which the various groups each have their own functions and positions, like organs in a body.¹⁰⁵ In his 'Maecenas' speech he mentions, besides emperors and senators, to whom he pays a relatively large amount of attention, *equites*, centurions, *caesariani*, the notables in the cities, imperial freedmen, soldiers, the populace of Rome, and the *demoi* of the other cities (52.19–22; 24–6; 27; 30–2; 37). They are the organs, the constituent elements of the body which is the empire.¹⁰⁶ Remarkably enough, Dio is fairly uninterested in much of the staple subject-matter of true biography. He has relatively little to say about the internal psychology of his emperors, neither does he dwell on the odd features of their private lives and habits that so attracted Suetonius' attention.¹⁰⁷

An important source of information about the emperors who reigned between A.D. 180 and 238 is Herodian's work on the period after the reign of Marcus

Aurelius. Herodian is more or less a mystery. He may have lived from about AD 180 until after AD 250. From his work arises a picture of a widely traveled Greek, a civil servant who during his career had acquired first-hand knowledge of Rome and of other parts of the empire, especially Asia Minor. He seems to have a partially internal status of the narrator.¹⁰⁸ In a formal sense Herodian's work is a simple linear narrative of political events, broken only by speeches that follow the familiar conventions of ancient historiography.¹⁰⁹ Herodian's work is a mixture of history, encomium, novel, and biography. Like Plutarch in his *Vitae*, Herodian mentions all kinds of trivialities, characteristic of the personalities of the emperors, who are his main issue, whereas dates, geographical data, and important historical facts are sometimes dealt with very briefly and fairly inaccurately. Herodian used all kinds of rhetorical devices to bring his accounts to life. He made use of contrasting schemes and employed traditional commonplaces to interpret historical facts and to label his personalities.¹¹⁰ In Herodian's *Histories* the Roman empire is seen as a conglomerate of peoples who all have specific characteristics and all lie under the dominance of the emperors, who are the backbone of the state and the polity, and of Rome, the very seat of the empire.¹¹¹

There are two other contemporary literary sources. One contemporary author was the prominent Athenian Dexippus, who must have died just before the end of the 270s. He was a local notable, not a senator.¹¹² In 267–268 he was involved in the struggle against the Heruli, who had invaded the territory of his native Athens. Dexippus wrote a book about the successors of Alexander the Great, a historical survey (*Chronica*) from mythical times until the end of Claudius II Gothicus (AD 270), and a *Scythica*, on the wars against the Goths, Carpi, and other tribes from presumably 238 to 274, the year of Aurelian's *triumphus*. Just a few fragments of his works survive. Later authors, such as Zosimus and the writer of the *Historia Augusta*, were influenced by Dexippus' works.¹¹³ Like Dexippus, Zosimus regularly focused on the Pontic regions, other parts of Asia Minor, and Greece. The most relevant fragments of Dexippus' works are frg. 17, 23, and 24 Martin, on episodes of Decius' Gothic war in the Balkans of the years AD 250–251; frg. 22 Martin, on a siege of Marcianopolis in Moesia Inferior; frg. 25 Martin, a speech by Dexippus himself to the Athenians who want to fight invading Herulians in 267; frg. 27 Martin, on a siege of Side in Asia Minor; frg. 28 Martin, on negotiations of the emperor Aurelian with Germanic warriors called Iuthungi; frg. 30 Martin, on Aurelian and the Vandals,¹¹⁴ and some recently discovered fragments, found in the Codex Vindobonensis Hist. Gr. 73 folios 192f., 194f., and 195v. They seem to stem from Dexippus' *Scythica*. These fragments were published by Günther Martin and Jana Grusková.¹¹⁵ Some of those fragments, for example 23 and 25 Martin, contain passages from orations, rhetorical show-pieces, which diminishes their value.

A fairly problematic contemporary text is the *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, which may have been written by a Jewish author from Alexandria in Egypt.¹¹⁶ According to Potter it collects a series of earlier texts in a rough chronological order. In the form of oracular prophesies contemporary mid-third century events, from Gordian III's

Persian war until Odaenathus' raid to Ctesiphon in 262–263, are commented upon. *Oracula Sibyllina* XIII is invaluable as a view of the period 242–263 from the eastern provinces.¹¹⁷

Some third century upheavals are fresh memories in the *Panegyrici Latini*, orations in praise of Constantius I, Maximian, Constantine the Great, and other later emperors. The eighth and ninth orations in this collection, for example, remind their audiences of the upheavals under Valerian, Gallienus, and their successors in dark colors, mentioning for example the miserable situation of the empire under Gallienus and the destruction of Autun under Claudius II.¹¹⁸

A problematic literary source is the so-called *Historia Augusta* (HA), a series of biographies of emperors who reigned between 117 and 284.¹¹⁹ Apparently it was written by one author, probably a senator at Rome, between AD 395 and 399. The first biographies, from Hadrian to Caracalla, contain good historical information next to more novelist material, but the later imperial *vitae*, from Macrinus to Carus and his sons, are full of fantasies, anachronisms, late fourth century ideas, moralistic diatribes, forged letters, bogus names and more fictional stuff.¹²⁰ But even so they are of some value, regularly containing sound information as well, coming from good sources, for example the works of Marius Maximus and Dexippus.¹²¹ As Anthony Birley observes, the author of the HA began to insert pieces of fiction and various sententious remarks in the biographies of the second-century figures, but found infinitely more scope to do so in third-century *Lives*.¹²² One of the more important *Lives*, the *Vita* of Severus Alexander, may be considered a 'mirror of princes' and is not a work of history.¹²³ In spite of all its shortcomings, any student of third-century AD Roman history should use the HA, because it is the most elaborate literary source we have. Whenever the HA is the only source for something, however, we had better leave it out, unless there are reasons to suppose that the author of the HA had good sources at his disposal.

There are a few fourth-century epitomes in Latin that may have borrowed much from one common source, the so-called Enmann's *Kaisergeschichte* (EKG). It might be that the lost work of Marius Maximus, who wrote biographies of emperors as a continuator of Suetonius, influenced not only the early *Lives* of the *Historia Augusta*, probably up to the *Life of Macrinus*, but also the fourth-century Latin epitomes. The epitomes were written by Aurelius Victor, an Anonymus, Festus, and Eutropius. The latter's work was intensively used by the Christian author Orosius, in his *Historiae adversus paganos*. The authors of the epitomes concentrate on the emperors and their military *res gestae*, but their works also contain important evidence about other issues.¹²⁴ There is also a fourth-century chronicle, the so-called Chronographer of 354, valued for the dates it gives for the reigns of the emperors from Julius Caesar to Licinius.¹²⁵

It is unfortunate that just a few fragments survive of the earlier books of the work of Ammianus Marcellinus, the books in which he treats third-century history. He was probably born at Antioch, between 325 and 330, and died after 391. He served Constantius II in his Persian war, and subsequently went to Italy, to live at Rome. Although his native tongue was Greek he wrote a

history of the Roman empire in Latin, from the emperor Nerva (AD 96–98) to the battle of Adrianople (378).¹²⁶

Some information about third-century AD Roman history can be gathered from works of contemporary Christian authors such as Cyprian and Origenes, and from later chronicles written by Eusebius (AD 260–339) and Hieronymus (AD 345–420) who rewrote and amplified Eusebius' chronicle in Latin, probably on the basis of the *Kaisergeschichte* and Eutropius' *Breviarium*. These chroniclers started at Abraham, and stopped somewhere in the fourth century AD, Eusebius at 325–326 and Hieronymus at 378.¹²⁷ Eusebius is better known for his Church History, his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (HE), in which he sketched the development of Church and Christianity up to Constantine's victory over Licinius in 324. In this work he concentrated on successive bishops, Christian scholars, heresies, persecutions of Christians, and martyrs. His *Ecclesiastical History* contains official documents, letters written by bishops and other important Christians, and quite a few quotations from earlier Christian works.¹²⁸

There is relevant information in the works of later Greek authors, from Zosimus who lived in Constantinople under the emperor Anastasius (491–518) up to Zonaras who served the emperor Alexius Comnenus in the twelfth century AD. Zosimus (PLRE II 1206, nr 6) was *advocatus fisci* and *comes* in Constantinople, and wrote the six books of his *Nea Historia* between 498 and 518. His first book contains five chapters on Greek and Roman history until Octavian, an *epitome* in 16 chapters on the emperors from Augustus (27 BC–AD 14) up to Philip the Arab (244–249), and in the chapters 23–73 a more elaborate survey of the reigns of the emperors from Decius to Carinus (251–284). In 1.5.3–4 Zosimus turns out to be very critical about the quality of the monarchy that came into being under Augustus. In his view this monarchical system is a public disaster. Zosimus summarizes events per region, and is not always accurate in his chronology. Concentrating on the east, the Balkans and the Pontic region, especially on the 'Scythic' wars, he leaves out a lot of western history (Gaul, Spain, and Britain). In this he may have been influenced by Dexippus' *Scythica*, but this bias may also have been caused by the politico-geographic situation of his own days. He may have looked at the world first and foremost from Constantinople.¹²⁹

Of the work of an Anonymus who seems to have continued the Roman History of Cassius Dio up to the reign of Constantine the Great just 15 fragments are extant, but among them are a few that are informative and important. Although there is no certainty, he might be identical with Petrus Patricius who was born at Thessalonica about 500, became a bureaucrat, served from 534 as an ambassador of the Byzantine emperor among the Ostrogoths, and became *magister officiorum* in 539, at Constantinople.¹³⁰ Of his *Historiae* from Caesar and Mark Antony until the reign of Constantius II a few fragments are extant.¹³¹ Some important and informative fragments are still extant of the work of Ioannes Antiochenus, a world chronicle from Adam to the death of the emperor Phocas (AD 610).¹³² In his passages on third-century history this author seems to have followed Herodian, the EKG tradition, and Zosimus. Nothing is known of the life and career of this Byzantine writer.¹³³ Georgius Syncellus was a secretary

of Tarasius, patriarch at Constantinople (784–806). He wrote a world chronicle from Adam to Diocletian. Syncellus may have died about 810. The third-century part of his chronicle contains lists of bishops, letters written by Christians, martyrs who were – in his recurring phraseology – perfected in God, and in between abbreviated surveys of historical events. He is somewhat more copious about the period of Valerian and Gallienus, maybe under the influence of Dexippus.¹³⁴ Not much is known about Georgius Cedrenus who at the end of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century wrote a chronicle of the world from the Creation to AD 1057. Just a handful of lines from his work are relevant to this study.¹³⁵ Much more is known about the last author treated here, Ioannes Zonaras, a Byzantine chronicler who was a secretary of the emperor Alexius Comnenus (1081–1118). He retired to a monastery after his master's death, wrote his works there, and may have died about 1150–1160. He wrote an *Epitome Historiarum* in 18 books, from the creation of the world to the death of Alexius in 1118. For the history of Rome he followed Cassius Dio's work up to the early third century, and from then on he used works that are lost to us. The quality of this work is dependent on the sources that this author epitomized or copied.¹³⁶

Juridical texts

To any student of third-century Roman history the *Digesta* (Dig.) and the *Codex Justinianus* (CJ) are most relevant. The *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, of which they form part, was issued between 529 and 534 by order of the emperor Justinian (527–565) and contains a collection of works in jurisprudence, most of which had been written by some of the greatest of Roman jurists, Aemilius Papinianus (Papinian, possibly a Syrian, c. 150–212), Domitius Ulpianus from Tyre (Ulpian, c. 170–223), Paul, most of whose life is unknown, and Herennius Modestinus who flourished until about 240. Their works were largely based on decisions and answers to petitions given by Marcus Aurelius, his colleague Lucius Verus, and the early Severan emperors. These jurists were no longer senators who had practiced Roman law as a favorite free time pursuit. Instead they were *equites* who were having successful careers in the emperor's service; they were more like high bureaucrats than amateur aristocrats.¹³⁷ In the law codes there are many traces of imperial rescripts. To quote Tor Hauken: 'There are only a handful of epigraphic sources of imperial rescripts, but the law-codes provide a rich material; 2609 rescripts have been collected and organized chronologically in a Palingenesia.'¹³⁸ However, as Fergus Millar makes clear, there is not much third-century evidence regarding the implementation of imperial administration.¹³⁹

Inscriptions, coins, and papyrus texts¹⁴⁰

Most inscriptions are very short, fragmentary, or otherwise uninformative, but there are epigraphical texts that contain important information about historical events, social problems, imperial decisions, careers made in the emperor's service, and

the way in which emperors represented themselves. A main function of most honorary inscriptions, career inscriptions included, was to broadcast excellent deeds and high statuses. Apparently functions in the service of the empire were considered status markers, and so loom large in career inscriptions.¹⁴¹ There are many inscriptions from the years 193–222, and still quite a few from the reign of Severus Alexander (222–235), but then the number of inscriptions declines, to dwindling figures in the third quarter of the third century; there was a decay of the ‘epigraphic habit,’ which is not easy to explain.¹⁴² This decay may have been caused by impoverishment of local elites, combined with transformations in local power relations and in the way local *potentes* represented themselves. The ‘epigraphic habit’ had been a means of claiming and asserting a place in society,¹⁴³ in competition with other claimants to local positions of honor, but since the days of Marcus Aurelius *honores*, *munera*, and benefactions had become costly obligations, which had to be allotted by local councils to their members and some other supposedly well-to-do people, as book 50 of the *Digesta* and more than a handful of papyrus texts illustrate. There was no competition any more, and honorary functions, benefactions, and liturgies (*munera*) became a burden and sometimes a cause of bankruptcy to members of local elites, not something to boast of in public texts. Jochen Griesbach points out that the ‘portrait habit,’ that is the setting up of honorary statues by civic élites in public places, also declined from about AD 250.¹⁴⁴ Another sign of decay is the increasing habit of reusing inscribed stones, from which the old texts were erased. According to Géza Alföldy, this started – apart from a few isolated and exceptional earlier examples – in the second half of the third century AD.¹⁴⁵ An important inscription is the so-called *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*, the great inscription of the Sassanid Persian king Shapur I, still extant at Naqsh-e Rostam in Persia. It contains a contemporary Persian report inscribed on a ka’aba about three great victories gained by king Shapur I (AD 241–270) over Roman imperial forces, those of AD 244, 252–253, and 260.¹⁴⁶

Papyrus texts from Egypt and the Euphrates valley constitute an important source of information too.¹⁴⁷ They give us evidence about chronological data, imperial administration and representation, calamities and other historical events, social relations, economic developments and, of course, requisitions and other fiscal and liturgical burdens. A fairly awkward question arises here. Is it right to use data from Roman Egypt to come to conclusions about developments in the entire Roman empire? Or is Egypt an isolated and peculiar part of the Roman empire, and is it not possible to generalize on the basis of evidence coming from Egyptian contexts? In my view it is possible to base conclusions about developments in the Roman empire on evidence that mainly comes from Egypt. This province was not that special and exclusive, particularly not after AD 200, the year of the municipalization that Septimius Severus introduced to Egyptian communities.¹⁴⁸

Roman imperial coinage as well as local coins provide important evidence, particularly about monetary developments, financial policies, and imperial representation. Potentially the most effective medium through which to make symbolic

gestures was coinage, since it had the widest distribution of any medium.¹⁴⁹ Both obverse and reverse of imperial coins presented images of authority. The emperor's head on the obverse is the symbol of the central power of the state, but any allusion to his successes, qualities or honors on the reverse is also an evocation of authority.¹⁵⁰ Images and legends on imperial coins followed preferences and wishes of the emperors.¹⁵¹ Erika Manders and Olivier Hekster found that third-century Roman emperors deliberately used their coinage to represent their imperial ideologies, which consequently can be tracked down through an analysis of this evidence. Every third-century emperor was unique in the images that he sent to his subjects, and the development of ideological representation on third-century imperial coinage was largely determined by responses to impressive contemporary events and reactions to images created by predecessors or indeed by competitors or usurpers. Fleur Kemmers demonstrates that emperors adapted images and texts on coins, which were sent to frontier armies, to the political situation in the regions where those armies served.¹⁵² Imperial coins reflected what was thought important at government level. The standard work most frequently used in this monograph is the *Roman Imperial Coinage* (RIC), volumes 4 and 5. Using the RIC is in some ways disadvantageous. This corpus is not always reliable and the way in which the RIC dates and classifies coins, and identifies mints is not completely unproblematic. Nonetheless, it is the only continuous survey of imperial coins, with their images and legends, which justifies using it. Robert Göbl and Michael Geiger published good surveys of Roman imperial coinage from AD 253 to 268.¹⁵³

Archeological evidence

Archeological findings may tell us a lot about material culture, art, imperial representation, the history of inhabitation, building programs – either in Rome or elsewhere – levels of prosperity, and the vicissitudes of towns, villages, and *villae* over time. Imperial artwork, such as sculptured portraits, historical reliefs, and triumphal monuments are important sources of our knowledge of imperial ideology and representation.¹⁵⁴ In some cases archeological remains reveal thus far unknown historical events, such as the battle at the Harzhorn near Kalefeld in Niedersachsen, where Roman troops under Maximinus Thrax fought the Germans.¹⁵⁵ Scholars who like to put the so-called third century crisis into perspective usually heavily lean on archeological evidence. In 1999 Christian Witschel, for example, tried to show – on the basis of archeological evidence – that until the third quarter of the third century regions such as Italy, Gaul, Britain, Spain, and Northern Africa maintained their traditional infrastructures, their density of population and their prosperity.¹⁵⁶ However, material remains may indicate a continuity of inhabitation, but do not tell us anything about diminishing carrying capacities that may threaten the continuity of tax returns and *euergesia*, social tensions that undermine the authority of local *potentes*, decreasing resources in a period of seemingly continuous prosperity, and the relative weight of taxation and requisition. And only every now

and then they give any information about specific historical events. And as the same Witschel observes, archeological surveys regularly miss the mark, and do not always establish, for example, where nuclei of settlement were.¹⁵⁷

The conclusion ending this section must be that the sources of our knowledge of the history of the period 193–284, especially of events happening between 238 and 284, are too often partial, lacunous, fragmentary or not historically oriented. Nonetheless I do not share the opinion that we should abstain from describing and analyzing third-century developments. Combining and weighing the available evidence we should be able to come to a reconstruction of third-century political and military events and their impact on the sources of imperial power.

1.4. Status quaestionis

As the bibliography at the end of this book shows, since the beginning of the twentieth century many books, volumes, and articles have been published about specific sources or texts, emperors, other important persons, events, upheavals, external, and internal conflicts, offices, careers, economic problems, diseases, and religious and cultural developments. Results of all this work are summarized in a few leading standard works, such as the third volume of the *Storia di Roma*, David Potter's *The Roman Empire at Bay*, the twelfth volume of the second edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, Michel Christol's *L'empire romain du IIIe siècle*, Clifford Ando's *Imperial Rome AD 193 to 284*, and the voluminous work published by Klaus-Peter Johné and his collaborators, called *Die Zeit der Soldatenkaiser*.¹⁵⁸

A common opinion seems to be that after 235 the focus of imperial government shifted to wars at the northern and eastern borders, which demonstrated that Roman military superiority no longer was self-evident. To improve their chances and keep the enemies out, emperors had to lean on well-trained mobile forces and near-professional officers. Through the many external and internal wars that were fought between AD 230 and 284 the power of the armed forces grew, because the emperors were dependent on them, whereas the senate in Rome lost significance. Replacing senators, militarily experienced equestrian personnel took many places in military command and the government of provinces, and most of the emperors who were fighting in the wars had only seldom an opportunity to visit the *curia* in Rome. A consequence of these changes was that peripheral provinces that provided recruits and career soldiers became relatively more important, as exemplified by Andreas Alföldi's view of the third century as the 'age of the Pan-nonians'.¹⁵⁹ Another consequence was that after AD 268 the emperors came from the equestrian order and were military men who knew how to wage wars.

Another well-known opinion is that after about 230, but perhaps earlier, from the reign of Marcus Aurelius, local elites lost much of their power, and suffered more administrative and fiscal coercion. Roman emperors permanently needed more funds than they had at their disposal to pay the armed forces and successfully conduct the many wars, and compensated this deficit by a debasement of the currency, confiscations, and extra requisitions on top of ever heavier taxes, thus

creating inflation and destroying any prosperity that was left. One of the groups that suffered was the curial class, the local notables who had to keep up a multitude of liturgies and unsalaried local *honores*, were responsible for imperial taxes, and had to provide food, goods, and means of transportation to passing armed forces. They had to give way to supra-local *potentes*, such as military men, bureaucrats, and *curatores rei publicae* who had to put local finances into order after periods of deficit and default. Third-century emperors strengthened their positions by ruling in a more authoritarian and bureaucratic fashion, leaning on their military forces and developing a personal bureaucracy, which foreshadowed the apparatus of the Tetrarchy and Constantine the Great. The consequence was that local gentry, which in the first half of the third century still had been a solid, well-entrenched class, consisting of owners of substantial medium-sized properties who actively participated in the management of their estates, after about 250 started to give way to supra-local *potentes* who had become powerful in the expanding bureaucracy. Max Weber thought that cities and towns nearly collapsed and that life in the empire became more rural, less urban.¹⁶⁰ Wolf Liebeschuetz supposes that by the mid-third century the classical city was under pressure everywhere. Instead of rich individuals being eager for the honor of membership in the city-council, many existing councilors now sought to escape from the *curia*. To prevent this, the imperial government issued a stream of legislation. There was fear of invasion and cities all over the empire received fortifications.¹⁶¹ Jairus Banaji speaks of a decline of the 'gymnasial class' and of a weakening of its hold on the countryside surrounding the towns in Egypt, where a sizeable percentage of the evidence is coming from.¹⁶² There are other opinions, though. Colin Adams shows, on the basis of papyrus texts, that higher échelons of the bureaucracy in Egypt even at the end of the third century had to struggle hard to control local government.¹⁶³ There may have been more continuity with earlier ages than has been supposed.

It is not possible to write about third-century Roman imperial history without taking sides in the debate about the so-called crisis of the empire. By crisis I understand an escalation of problems into an insoluble, complex, many-sided malfunctioning of the existing system, which inevitably must result in changes in administration, power relations, and social structures, and undermines the continuity of life styles.¹⁶⁴ First of all, before entering the debate, we should ask ourselves whether contemporary or near-contemporary ancient writers (and other sources) are showing any awareness of crisis. The answer should be positive. Describing the end of Marcus Aurelius' reign Cassius Dio says that after this excellent emperor had died the history of the Roman empire descended from a kingdom of gold to one of iron and rust, as affairs did for the Romans of that day (71.36.4). In a well-known passage, Herodian observes:

A comparative survey of the period of about two hundred years from Augustus, the point at which the regime became a monarchy, to the age of Marcus would reveal no such similar succession of reigns, variety of fortunes in both civil and foreign wars, disturbances among the provincial populations, and

destruction of cities in both Roman territory and many barbarian lands. There have never been such earthquakes and plagues, or tyrants and emperors with such unexpected careers, which were rarely if ever recorded before. Some of these men ruled for quite a long time, others held only transient power; some hardly reached the title and fleeting honor before they were deposed. In a period of sixty years the Roman empire was shared by more rulers than the years warranted.

(1.1.4f.)

Some of Cyprian's works, particularly his *Ad Demetrianum*, are repeatedly quoted as evidence for an actually existing awareness of crisis in the middle of the third century AD. In *Ad Demetrianum* 3 Cyprian says that the world has grown old and that nothing is as productive as it was, nor the fields, nor the mines and quarries. He continues that the numbers of farmers, soldiers, and sailors are waning, and that innocence is disappearing from the market places, justice from courts, skills from arts and trades, and concord from friendships. Writing during the period of crisis, this Christian intellectual and leader eloquently speaks about real crisis-phenomena.¹⁶⁵ It is possible, however, that Christian authors such as Cyprian described their own times in dark colors because of eschatological reasons. They expected the Second Coming of the Lord, and believed that a very difficult period was to precede that great event. The author of *Panegyricus Latinus* 8 was also aware of a crisis in the third quarter of the third century. The author of this oration very well remembers the turmoil under Gallienus and Probus. In 8.10.1–3, speaking about the defection of the western provinces under Gallienus, he says about this emperor's reign that in those days, whether through neglect of affairs or through a certain deterioration in Roman fortune, the state was dismembered of almost all its limbs. He continues:

At that time both the Parthian had too lofty pretensions and the Palmyrene claimed equality; all of Egypt and the Syria's had seceded, Raetia was lost and Noricum and the Pannonias devastated. Italy herself, mistress of nations, lamented the destruction of very many of its cities.

In *Panegyricus Latinus* 10.1.5 the *restitutor* theme, well known from imperial coins of the emperors Valerian and Gallienus (joint reign), returns.¹⁶⁶ In 9.18.4 the author of *Panegyricus Latinus* relates about signs of recovery at the end of the third century, one of them being that camps of cavalry units and cohorts are re-established all along the Rhine, Danube, and Euphrates frontiers, which suggests that they had been in a bad state before. Very interesting is an epigraphical text published by Werner Eck. He discusses a monument from Gressenich near Aachen (AD 238), which shows the following text:

I[ovi] O[ptimo] M[aximo] et genio loci pro salute imperi Ma/sius Ianuari et Ti/tianus Ianua/ri v[otum] s[olverunt] I[ibentes] m[erito] sub cura Ma/si s[upra] s[cripti] et/ Maceri Accepi, Pio et Proclo/[consulibus].

This expresses a wish for the wellbeing (*pro salute*) of the *empire (imperii)*, not for a given emperor, which testifies to anxiety about its situation.¹⁶⁷ So three of the five texts I quote suggest that already before 249 there was an awareness of decay, of danger.

The debate about crisis or no crisis started in the beginning of the twentieth century. Edward Gibbon and Theodor Mommsen did not speak of ‘the crisis of the third century’ but Léon Homo did, in an article published in 1913, and so did Michael Rostovtzeff in 1923.¹⁶⁸ Seeing an analogy with the Russian revolution of 1917–1920, the latter came to the opinion that in the third century soldiers who belonged to the class of poor peasants attacked the ‘bourgeoisie’ in the cities and tried to destroy Greco-Roman élite civilization, a theory that has never been accepted by other scholars. Another idea that Rostovtzeff brought forward became much more influential. In the third century, he thought, the Roman empire witnessed a militarization of government, under more and more autocratic rulers.¹⁶⁹ At the end of this decade, about 1929, Andreas Alföldy started a series of publications about third-century Roman history, which in 1967 were published together in one volume, called *Studien zur Geschichte der Weltkrisis des dritten Jahrhunderts nach Chr.* In his view there was an all-encompassing crisis in the Roman empire in the third century, which was in the end overcome by the genius of the Pannonians and Illyrians, who on the points of their swords carried the empire through violence and chaos. Alföldy’s views were to a large extent shared by Wilhelm Ensslin and H.P. L’Orange, who more than Alföldy paid attention to ideological aspects of the third-century crisis. Alföldy and Ensslin both contributed chapters to volume XII of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, which came out in 1939 and was entitled *The Imperial Crisis and Recovery*. During the following decades, until about 1977, third-century Roman history was generally seen as one of crisis. Widely read publications that came into being in those years were, among others, Raoul Rémondon’s *La crise de l’empire romain de Marc Aurèle à Anastase*, Géza Alföldy’s article *The Crisis of the Third Century as Seen by Contemporaries*, and Ramsay MacMullen’s publications, particularly his *Roman Government’s Response to Crisis A.D. 235–284*.¹⁷⁰

By and large the crisis of the third century in the Roman empire was seen as a complex historical process, brought about by the interaction of many different factors, which Alföldy summarizes in nine points: 1. The switching from the rule of an emperor to that of a military despot; 2. The general instability; 3. The growing power of the armies; 4. The increasing influence of military provinces such as those along the Danube; 5. Social shifts; 6. Economic problems; 7. The decrease in and unequal distribution of the population; 8. A religious and moral crisis; 9. Invasions of foreign peoples in practically all border regions and even beyond, into the heartlands of the empire.¹⁷¹ MacMullen saw the third century, particularly the half century from 235 to 284, as a period of protracted emergency, a time of war during which literary and juridical activities had less weight, Christians became a kind of regularly persecuted dissidents, and emperors more than anything else were raising money and supplies, to be able

to persevere in the empire's defense.¹⁷² In the opening lines of his *Roman government's response to crisis*, MacMullen says:

If the half century after 235 is approached in the manner of its contemporary historians and through the most salient and accessible facts, its chief features can be arranged in a comprehensible line. First foreign wars. Alexander Severus' unsuccessful handling of these prepared his death. These too prevented his successors from gaining a firm seat in the throne they scrambled up to. Such recurrent failure to restore political stability generated civil strife as much as it attracted invasions. Augusti had therefore to arm themselves on two fronts. They needed money in unprecedented quantities, and laws and men somehow to produce it. Armies, bureaucracies, and taxes all grew suddenly, simultaneously. At the same time, the economy in the areas closest to the scenes of wars became less able to meet the demands placed on it, because it was pillaged and fought over; and that combined mint master and paymaster, the desperate emperor of whatever reign, accordingly stretched his supplies of silver over a larger and larger bulk of more and worse coinage. Inflation set in, to a degree unprecedented. With this (as with super-added plague, divinely appropriate to cap the whole structure of catastrophe), even folk inside the least disturbed areas like Campania or Southern Gaul had to reckon, and adapt their lives to it.¹⁷³

In one of the volumes published by the network *Impact of Empire*, Armin Eich formulates a comparable opinion. In his view the Roman empire in the third century AD was caught in a vicious circle of defensive, expensive warfare, impoverishment of the central government, and a diminishing legitimacy of imperial power.¹⁷⁴

Fundamental objections against the concept of an age-long third-century crisis, all over the Roman empire, with a deepening of the problems from 235 onwards, were brought forward by Karl Strobel and Christian Witschel. Mainly on the basis of archeological findings, they maintained that in North Africa, Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, parts of Italy, Sicily, southern Gaul, parts of Spain, and Britain there was a high degree of continuity in inhabitation and material culture, without clear signs of crisis.¹⁷⁵ In their view there were regional crises, particularly in the third quarter of the third century, and especially in war-ravaged areas, such as the Danube regions, northern Gaul, the Germaniae, the Pontic region, and Mesopotamia. In their opinion modern observers who believed in an age-long all-encompassing crisis had been misled by too gloomy pictures in contemporary literary texts, such as Herodian's work or Cyprian's *Ad Demetrianum*. In this theory of a 'regionalization' of the third-century crisis a weak point is, however, that the various parts of the Roman empire did not exist on their own, as isolated entities, but were interconnected. Problems in one region might very well affect other, neighboring areas too, for example through a spreading and shifting of burdens.¹⁷⁶ Military disasters in one region might very well induce emperors to take too many soldiers from other areas to repair the situation, thus exposing

other border regions to invading and plundering. In 2007, in the opening article of the volume *Crises and the Roman Empire*, Wolf Liebeschuetz came to the conclusion that the term 'crisis' clearly and compactly sums up a good deal of what happened in the third century AD. For the first time in its existence the Roman empire had to fight major wars on its eastern and western frontiers at the same time. There was an endless succession of usurpations. For some time it looked as if Gaul and the eastern provinces might break away from the 'central' empire. There was a serious debasement of imperial silver money. The huge rise in prices following Aurelian's coinage reform can hardly be described as anything else than a currency crisis. There were outbreaks of plague, and at several moments, for example in the 260s, there was extreme danger to the empire as a whole. In Liebeschuetz' view, it is difficult to avoid using the term 'crisis,' concepts such as 'transformation' or 'accelerated change' being too weak and too flat to catch the extraordinary character of third-century history beyond AD 235.¹⁷⁷ He is completely right. The upheavals of the third quarter of the third century did indeed lead to an escalation of problems into an insoluble, complex, many-sided malfunctioning of the existing system, which inevitably resulted in changes in administration, power relations, and social structures, and in a shift away from traditional ideological concepts. But this is about one quarter of an age. A crisis of about 100 or more years, as was still accepted as a viable concept in the first edition of the Cambridge Ancient History, is an impossibility.

In recent decades several scholars came to other periodisations of third-century history. Since Edward Gibbon published his great work on the decline and fall of the Roman empire, the year 235 and the reign of Maximinus Thrax have been seen as a watershed, the start of an era of 'military anarchy.'¹⁷⁸ A deep political and military crisis came over the empire, however, only from about 249, and lasted up to the emperor Aurelian's reign. The first three decades of the century were a period of recovery after the preceding wars and epidemics, and the subsequent period was characterized by increasing problems, an *onset* of crisis.¹⁷⁹ In the period up to the reign of the emperor Decius there were already important changes but also many continuities with Antonine times, for example in economic and social relations, in military strategy and tactics, in appointment policies, in the administration of justice, in public religion, and in the representation of imperial power. Augustus, Trajan, and Marcus Aurelius enjoyed an undiminished popularity as paradigms of good monarchical behavior. Greek and Latin literary elite culture kept forming a common frame of reference among the higher orders in Rome, Italy, and the more cultured provinces. Besides, the year 235 did not usher in a new type of emperor, completely different from preceding rulers. As Michael Speidel points out, a close analysis of documentary sources suggests otherwise. The emperors who ruled beyond 235, at least up to 260, remained deeply rooted in existing imperial traditions. That they were supported by the military was nothing new. Emperors had always been dependent on the goodwill of the armed forces, as had been revealed by a number of disputed successions.¹⁸⁰

Notes

- 1 The size of the population of the Roman empire at the end of the second century AD is not really known; see Corbier in CAH XII, 2005, 397. According to Beloch 1886, 507, the Roman empire of Augustan times counted 54 million inhabitants. In CAH XI, 2000, 787–816, esp. 811–16, Bruce Frier estimates that the size of the empire's population was 45.5 millions in AD 14 and 61.4 millions in AD 164, on the eve of the devastating Antonine plague. On this issue see also Scheidel 2008, 17–70, who is like Frier a 'low counter.' Other specialists, called 'high counters,' come to much higher, less credible figures. See Bruun in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 214–17. One of them is Elio Lo Cascio who estimates the population of Italy in the beginning of our era at almost Renaissance levels. See Lo Cascio in Bowman and Wilson 2009, 87–106 (criticized by Roger Bagnall in the same volume, pp. 107–12). In the years of the Antonine plague, about 166–85/190, the empire must have lost a lot of people. Bagnall and Frier 1994, 173–4 come to an estimate of about 10 per cent of the population. Egypt, the source of almost all relevant evidence, may have lost 20 per cent. See Rathbone 1991, 174 and Scheidel 2002, 97–114. The latter's views and estimates are effectively criticized, though, by Bagnall 2002, 114–20, esp. 120. If a loss of about 10 per cent would have been suffered by the empire at large its population may have fallen back to c. 55 million at the end of the second century AD but if the loss of lives would have been about 20 per cent all over the empire, which is the estimate that Elio Lo Cascio brings forward in *Storia di Roma* II, Turin 1991, 707–16, the empire's population may have decreased to about 50 million. It is hard to reconstruct a reliable picture, though. See the critical article by Christer Bruun in the volume *Crises and the Roman Empire* (Bruun in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 201–17).
- 2 On the number of people living in the city of Rome see De Kleijn 2001, 61–8.
- 3 See Horden and Purcell 2000, 123–52, on what they call 'connectivity.' Cf. Temin 2001, 168–81.
- 4 Howgego 1992, 4.
- 5 Jongman in De Blois 2002, 29. On the character of the empire's economy see De Blois, Pleket and Rich in De Blois 2002, IX–XX; Jongman in De Blois 2002, 28–47 and Bowman and Wilson 2013, *passim*, and Bowman and Wilson 2017, Introduction. Bang 2008, 86–91 estimates the GDP of the Roman Empire in the second century AD before the Antonine plague at 60 million people as 30m tons of wheat equivalent or HS 13.7 bn, for a per capita mean of 500 kg or HS 229, somewhat lower than estimates by Scheidel and Friesen 2009, 74. However, see Silver 2009, 421–43 who criticizes Bang 2008.
- 6 Decurions are also called *curiales* (from *curia*, the communal council), or – in the eastern half of the empire – *bouleutai* (from *boulè*, the communal council in Greek-speaking parts of the empire).
- 7 Scheidel and Friesen 2009, 89.
- 8 On social structures in the Roman world see Alföldy 2011a. On slave society see Schumacher in Peachin 2011, 589–608, esp. 603. On the declining numbers of slaves and freedmen see Alföldy 2011a, 238, 244, 255; on the decreasing numbers of slaves in Italy in the first and second centuries AD see Scheidel 2005, 64–79, esp. 79.
- 9 Eck in De Ligt *et al.* 2004, 3–19. See also Millar 1993.
- 10 On the administration of the Roman empire see Millar 1992, 59–131, 203–72, 275–361. On third century developments in Roman imperial administration see Lo Cascio in CAH XII, 2005, 131–69; Eich 2005, 338–90, and Glas and Hartmann in Johne 2008, I, 641–72. On the administration of Italy see Eck 1979, 25–266, and Lo Cascio in CAH XII, 2005, 165–9. On the term local *potentes* see Slootjes 2009, 416–32.

- 11 Millar 1992, 6.
- 12 Hekster 2015, 1. He observes that such perceptions were constrained by the expectations and traditions of various imperial subjects. The formulation of emperorship was, effectively, a constant process of construction within genres of communication, representation, and public symbolism.
- 13 Herodian 7.6.1–4. See Buongiorno in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 75.
- 14 Herodian 1.6.5. However, in 2.10.9 the same author calls Rome the very seat of the empire. In *Dig.* 48.22.18 pr we are told that an exile cannot stay in Rome, the *communis patria*, nor in a town where the emperor is, which means that such a town at that moment is equivalent to Rome.
- 15 In *Institutiones* 2.17.8 Ulpian says: *Severus et Antoninus saepissime rescripserunt: licet enim soluti sumus, attamen legibus vivimus*. There is a parallel text in *CJ* 5.18.2 (4 April 207).
- 16 Michael Peachin argues that Ulpian here was thinking of Iulia Domna, the wife of Septimius Severus and mother of Caracalla. In 214–15, as the imperial train spent the winter in Nicomedia, the latter delegated to his mother to handle both *libelli* and *epistulae*, with the exception of the most important matters. Iulia Domna is attested to have performed the same function again at Antioch in 217, while her son was campaigning further to the east. See Peachin 1996, 160f.
- 17 In *Dig.* 1.4.1 pr we are told: ‘quod principi placuit legis habet vigorem.’ In *Dig.* 1.4.1.1 Ulpian tells us: ‘Quodcumque igitur imperator per epistulam et subscriptionem statuit vel cognoscens decrevit vel de plano interlocutus est vel edicto praecepit, legem esse constat. Haec sunt quas volgo constitutiones appellamus.’ See Millar 1992, 240, about subjects of the empire perceiving the emperors as sources of law and justice.
- 18 Panciera in De Blois *et al.* 2003, 238. See Herz in Rüpke 2007, 307–16; Manders 2012, 99ff.
- 19 Legutko 2000, 9. See De Blois in De Blois *et al.* 2006, 268–78. Cf. Benoist in Quet 2006, 33–5, who seems to distinguish the emperor from his function. In Herodian’s work, one of our main literary sources, the idea of institutionalization seems to be put into perspective, though. In 2.3.7 Herodian puts into the mouth of Septimius Severus: ‘The dignity of the first citizen does not depend on the seat he occupies, but on the deeds he achieves.’
- 20 See the well-documented article by Panciera in De Blois *et al.* 2003, 215–39. *Contra* De Jong in De Blois *et al.* 2003, 277: ‘In terms of representation, we can say that standardization of formulas and the absence of individualization (in papyrus texts) except by using the emperor’s personal name, may not have had a propagandistic effect to promote the individual emperors, but maybe the appearance of continuity of imperial authority was created by using generalized structures.’
- 21 Noreña 2001, 146. Cf. Ando 2000, 206–73.
- 22 See Elsner 1998, 54, where he quotes a passage from a sermon by bishop Severianus of Gabala, *On the creation of the world* 5.5 (AD 400), in which the latter says: ‘Since an emperor cannot be present to all persons, it is necessary to set up the statue of the emperor in law courts, market places, public assemblies, and theatres. In every place, in fact, in which an official acts, the imperial effigy must be present, so that the emperor may thus confirm what takes place.’ So even in the Christian era this was still valid. Ando 2000, 214f. speaks of staggering numbers of images and a rapid diffusion of imperial imagery, which was a kind of visual language that was universally intelligible and flexible. On functions and significance of imperial images see Benoist in Quet 2006, 45–53, and Benoist 2008b, 29–33.
- 23 See Eich 2005, 82f. He speaks of *Symbolsprache* and *Bildprogramme*.
- 24 See Hekster 2015.
- 25 On the imperial cult see Price 1986 (Asia Minor); Fishwick 1987 (western provinces); Beard, North and Price 1998, 169, 318, and 348–63; Benoist in Quet 2006, 27–59; De

- Jong in De Blois *et al.* 2006, 242–52 (Egypt); Herz in Rüpke 2007, 307ff.; Kaizer in Rüpke 2007, 447f; Fujii 2013 (Cyprus). According to Strubbe in De Blois *et al.* 2006, 121, at Pessinus, as in other towns in Asia Minor, the architecture of the emperor cult determined the spatial organization of the city. Priesthoods in the imperial cult became popular among the notables in Greek towns in the empire, even to the detriment of more traditional cults. See Horster in De Blois *et al.* 2006, 204ff. The imperial cult was well integrated in other celebrations. Schörner in De Blois *et al.* 2006, 143 argues that there are not many pictures of sacrifices, which had to do just with the imperial cult. He says: ‘Darstellungen von Opfern, die eindeutig auf den Kaiserkult bezogen werden können, sind in Kleinasien grundsätzlich selten.’ On the imperial cult in the third century see Benoist in Quet 2006, 27–64.
- 26 Lozano in Hekster and Kaizer 2011, 150.
- 27 Ando 2000, 362 remarks that the emperors flooded the empire with legislation and administrative acts. Eck in Haensch 2009, 75–96, points at the enormous amount of texts that were to be seen on fora and other public places in Rome. On imperial representation through texts, copies of rescripts and other official messages see Ando 2000, 109–17.
- 28 See Liebs in Kolb 2006, 137–52. This is the ‘petition- and- response model that lies at the basis of Millar’s *The Emperor in the Roman World* (Millar 1992). See Eich in Benoist 2012, 87–92. See also Connolly 2010 who attributes relatively more of the responses to the imperial secretariats than Millar does.
- 29 Sirks in De Blois 2001a, 121–35, esp. 130.
- 30 Ando 2000, 73–273; Hekster 2008, 11, 62f. Werner Eck points at communication through symbols of authority (‘Kommunikation durch Herrschaftszeichen’), see Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2009, 213f.
- 31 On *consilarii* and the *consilium principis*, which had an advisory role and was not a permanent or specialized state organ, see Crook 1975², esp. 66–91; Millar 1992, 110–22, and 238f. where he mentions reports of sessions under Septimius Severus; De Blois in idem 2001, 138; Eck in Kolb 2006, 67–77; Schöpe 2014, 315–31. On friends of the emperors, particularly under the Severans, see Schöpe 2014, 83–176.
- 32 On the *familia caesaris*, in Rome and the provinces, see Weaver 1972, 199–281.
- 33 On the senate as a corporate body, the wealth of senators, and their functions in the administration of the empire see Talbert 1984. On the senate in the third century see Heil in Johnes 2008, II, 715–36; on the senate under the Severan dynasty see Rollé-Ditzler in Faust and Leitmer 2011, 220–52.
- 34 See Leunissen 1989, 24–73 and 375–98. On the senatorial order and senatorial careers in the third century, esp. the period of the soldier-emperors, see Heil in Johnes 2008, II, 715–36. Under the Severan emperors the consulate still was their most important status-marker. See Schöpe 2014, 270.
- 35 The *advocatus fisci* represented the *fiscus* (imperial treasury) in court and apparently acted as legal authorities. See Crook 1995, 52f.
- 36 See Mennen 2011, 135f. An excellent chapter on the equestrian order in the third century was published by Heil in Johnes 2008, II, 737–61. On the not very fixed patterns distinguishable in equestrian careers see Demougin in De Blois 2001a, 24–34.
- 37 According to Speidel, M.A. 2007, 405–13, this province came into being in AD 195, its first prefect being Subatianus Aquila who in 206 became *praefectus Aegypti* (P. Oxy. 1100). See AE 1979, 625 (cf. D.Kennedy, ZPE 36, 1979, 255–62), where he is called *praefectus Mesopotamiae primus*.
- 38 Pont in Hekster *et al.* 2009, 185–211.
- 39 P.Yale 61. See Bowman 1986, 73.
- 40 See Eck in De Blois 2001a, 1–23. On specialization within the middle and lower ranks of the army see Speidel, M.A., in De Blois 2001a, 50–61.
- 41 Eck in Brice and Slootjes 2015, 145–60, esp. 145f.

- 42 Short surveys of Roman taxation under the Principate are given by Potter 2004, 50–60 and Corbier in CAH XII, 2005, 360–86. In his book on the metamorphosis – as he calls it – of the political system in the Roman empire Peter Eich convincingly argues that the raising of money to pay soldiers and bureaucrats is one of the main tasks of any ancient, medieval or early-modern government. See Eich 2005, 33–8.
- 43 See Lo Cascio in Kolb 2006, 32f.
- 44 Talbert in De Ligt *et al.* 2004, 37.
- 45 On the composition of local elites see Slootjes 2009, 416–32.
- 46 Brunt 1990, 270.
- 47 Burton in De Blois 2001a, 212. Kokkinia in De Ligt *et al.* 2004, 39–58 classifies the activities of provincial governors in Greek-speaking provinces as ruling, inducing, and arguing without changing existing local power relations. She describes those governors as leaders but also as partners and opponents of local governments. See also Dondin-Payre in De Ligt *et al.* 2004, 369f.
- 48 Van Nijf 2003, 317f.
- 49 Burton in De Blois 2001a, 207ff. makes clear that the richest and most important ten or 20 local councilors, called *dekaprotoi* and *eikosaprotoi*, had a special function in tax-raising for the emperor, at least in Asia Minor.
- 50 Local *munera* are summed up in *Dig.* 50.4.18 (Arcadius Charisius). *Angareia* and the *cursus publicus* may have been relatively heavy burdens, because they had a permanent or semi-permanent character; see Kolb 2000, 123ff. Because of the same reason, *eirenarchy* may have been a heavy obligation too. See Burton in De Blois 2001c, 209f.
- 51 Kolb in De Blois 2002, 76.
- 52 See Burton in De Blois 2001a, 203–5.
- 53 See Nicols in De Blois *et al.* 2006, 36–48.
- 54 See Horster in De Ligt *et al.* 2004, 331–55.
- 55 On the Roman army of the Principate see Le Bohec 1994; Bats *et al.* 1997, 141–9; Webster 1998; Goldsworthy 2004, 50–73; Cosme 2009, 76–100, and Le Bohec *et al.* 2015. On the army of the third century see Campbell in CAH XII, 2005, 110–20; Cosme 2009, 203–39, and Potter in Peachin 2011, 526–9. On Roman imperial fleets see Reddé 1986, 522–623.
- 56 See for example Strobel in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 207–37, on changes in the Rhine region under the impact of Roman camps and settlements.
- 57 Erdkamp in idem 2002, 5; Lee 2007, 76–8. According to Potter in Dijkstra *et al.*, eds. 2015, 33, the entire armed forces were increased to 436000 men by Septimius Severus.
- 58 On the impact of recruiting and settling veterans see Haynes in De Blois 2001a, 62–83; Haensch in De Blois 2001a, 84–108.
- 59 See Hebblewhite 2017, 140–2, 150–2.
- 60 See Le Bohec 1994, 207–30; Roth 1999, 117–55 (though focusing rather strongly on earlier periods, not so much on the third century), 236–43 (sources of supply in the imperial period); Herz in Erdkamp 2002, 22–46; Erdkamp in idem 2002, 55–69; Carreras Montfort in Erdkamp 2002, 70–83, and Lo Cascio in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 195–206.
- 61 See Alföldy in Chaniotis and Ducrey 2002, 123–50; Alföldy 2011a, 206f.
- 62 On taxation in cash and kind see Erdkamp 2005, 219–25.
- 63 De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, XVII.
- 64 See Verboven in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 295–313.
- 65 According to Duncan-Jones 1994, 45, about 77 per cent. David Potter, however, criticizes Duncan-Jones' calculations. See Potter in Dijkstra *et al.*, eds. 2015, 31 note 15. Unfortunately Potter does not give a reliable estimate himself, but he suggests that under Augustus the military budget, retirement bonuses included, cost the emperor

- 71 (!) per cent of his budget. Not so much different from Duncan-Jones' estimates. Mark Hebblewhite's estimate is that the armed forces took from 30 to 75 per cent of the overall budget of the empire (Hebblewhite 2017, 103).
- 66 See Hebblewhite 2017, 71–90.
- 67 See Erdkamp in idem 2002, 47–55; Lo Cascio in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 195–206; Cosme in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 239–60.
- 68 Remesal Rodríguez 1986. Maybe it is not all that certain. Elio Lo Cascio criticizes his ideas about trade between Hispania Baetica and the Rhine border. See Lo Cascio in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 204f.
- 69 Herz in Erdkamp 2002, 22f.
- 70 See Speidel, M.A. 2009, 256f.
- 71 See Speidel, M.A., in Kolb 2014, 80–99.
- 72 Adams in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 281–91, esp. 290f.; Speidel, M.A., in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 48–53. Vegetius 3.3.3f. is aware that armies have to be supplied either through purchase or requisition. Ziegler in Kennedy 1996, 119–34, shows that movements of troops unavoidably resulted in larger outputs of local coins along the transport routes involved, which was a burden to the communities that produced the extra coinage, and that this was not the only burden which passing armies inflicted on them. See also Mattern 1999, 142–9.
- 73 Hebblewhite 2017, 121, referring to Ulpian, *Dig.* 37.13.1.
- 74 Stoll in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 439–61. Similar developments are to be seen in North Africa, where *legio III Augusta* had some impact on the religion of the region where it was situated, and inversely local gods became Romanized. See Hilali in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 481–93.
- 75 Speidel, M.A., in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 53–6.
- 76 See Elsner 1998, 53.
- 77 Weber 1947, 152, where he describes power as 'the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests.' On Weber's definitions and theories of power see Anter 1995, esp. 35f. On p. 36 Anter says: 'Weber hat zwar seinen Gewaltbegriff nirgends näher präzisiert, spricht aber in seiner Staatsdefinition von einer spezifischen Art von Gewalt: der *legitimen* physischen Gewalt ..., das Gewaltmonopol an Legitimität gekoppelt.' According to Weber, there could not exist any real state without this 'Gewaltmonopol,' this monopoly of violence, or even better, of public violence.
- 78 *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 1125.
- 79 See Foucault 2008.
- 80 See the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 88. The emperor Augustus had already some ideas about the differences between power and authority. In his *Res Gestae* 34.3, he stipulates that he never had more formal power than his colleagues in any office he had held together with them, but that he had more authority than anyone else, saying: 'post id tempus [*i.e.* after the end of the civil wars, c. 31 BC] auctoritate omnibus praestiti, potestatis autem nihilo amplius habui quam ceteri, qui mihi quoque in magistratu conlegae fuerunt.'
- 81 *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 1410.
- 82 MacGregor Burns 1978, 425.
- 83 MacGregor Burns 1978, 141–254 (transforming leadership) and 257–397 (transactional leadership). See also MacGregor Burns 2003. For the quoted passage see De Kleijn 2009, 313, referring to MacGregor Burns 1978, 425f. In her note 14 (p. 313) she observes that for charismatic leadership Burns is greatly indebted to Max Weber's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, and refers to R. Hartscher, *Charisma und Res Publica: Max Webers Herrschaftssoziologie und die römische Republik*, Stuttgart 2000, 55–63, who gives a short introduction to Weber's charisma concept. Charismatic

- and transformational leadership are not much different, both producing a stronger and eventually more top-down power than transactional leadership could do. See also Rowold and Heinitz 2007, 121–33.
- 84 As was long ago argued by S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, Harmondsworth 1976, 2nd ed. For a summary of his theory and some examples taken from the history of Late Republican Roman history see De Blois 1987, 1–59.
- 85 R. Schroeder, in: Hall and Schroeder 2006, 6.
- 86 See Potter in Dijkstra *et al.* 2015, 29–33.
- 87 See Gorski in Hall and Schroeder 2006, 101.
- 88 Mann 1986, 2.
- 89 See for example Kertzer 1988, 2–3. The definition of the term ‘ritual’ has been much discussed by scholars of many disciplines without reaching consensus (Icks 2011, 349).
- 90 Sturken and Cartwright 2001, 10–19.
- 91 The term ‘personal bureaucracy’ was borrowed from Eich 2005, 32f.
- 92 On this élite culture see now Flower, Pina Polo, Schmitz, and Bablitz in Peachin 2011, 271–334. See also Whitmarsh 2005.
- 93 See Sahin and French 1987, 137 (on an inscription from Takina in Phrygia, AD 212–213); Herrmann 1990, 64; Ando 2000, 98 (referring to *Dig.* 14.3.11.3 [Ulpian]).
- 94 See Ando 2000, 85, 88, 90ff. (local archives and local history); Eich 2005, 184–7.
- 95 On the administration of imperial domains see Weaver 1972, 270–81; Millar 1992, 175–89, and Eich 2005, 290–314. On mines and quarries and their administration see Eich 2005, 314–37 and Domergue 2008, 197–202.
- 96 People were aware of differences between public and private violence; see *Dig.* 43.16.1.2 (Ulpian), on rules about public and private violence in the *leges Iuliae* (of the emperor Augustus).
- 97 The term ‘extraction-coercion cycle’ was borrowed from Peter Eich (Eich 2005, 35 and idem in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 524ff.).
- 98 See for example the careers discussed by Hubert Devijver (Devijver 1976, *passim*) and Brian Dobson (Dobson 1978, *passim*).
- 99 There are quite a few surveys of sources. Here I mention Bats *et al.* 1997, 15–28; Witschel 1999, 25–117; idem 2004, 255–60; Christol 2006a, 255–7; E. Baltrusch, K. Ehling, Th. Gerhardt, U. Hartmann, Ph. Huyse, K.-P. Johné, E. Kettenhofen, A. Luther and K. Schade in Johné 2008, I, 15–123. Specialized surveys are given by Bland 1991, 484, focusing on the reign of Gordian III; Geiger 2013, 28–70, focusing on Valerian and Gallienus, and Kreucher 2003, 14–39, concentrating on the history of the emperor Probus.
- 100 This survey of sources is not exhaustive, but only contains the more important and informative literary works that were most relevant to this study. An exhaustive survey is given by Hartmann in Johné 2008, I, 19–44.
- 101 See Aalders 1986, 291–302; Swain 1996, 402–8. On Dio as a Greek narrator see Hidber 2004, 187–99. According to Moscovich 2004, 356–68, esp. 368, Dio was familiar with Greek sophists, some of whom were associated with Iulia Domna’s circle of philosophers. The edition of Dio’s work used in this book is E. Cary, *Dio’s Roman History* IX, Loeb, London/ Cambridge MA 1969. The numbering of books and chapters is the one that is given in the margins of the text.
- 102 Millar in Troiani and Zecchini 2005, 30.
- 103 Dio’s ordinariate is attested to by *CJ* 5.62.10, a message to a governor Crispinus from AD 229, *Augusto Alexandro III et Dione consulibus*. Dio’s full name was Lucius Claudius Cassius Dio Cocceianus (c. AD 165–235) and he came from a distinguished family from Nicaea in Bithynia; Dio’s father was a senator, Marcus Cassius Apronianus. On Dio’s name, life, and career see Millar 1964, 5–27; idem in Troiani Zecchini

- 2005, 29–35; Ameling 1984, 123–38; Leunissen 1989, 163 n.147; Gowing 1990, 49–54; Hose 1994, 356ff.; idem 2007, 461–7; Schmidt 1997, 2634–8; Birley 1997, 1014f.; Duff 2003, 118; Ash 2006, 146f. Dio may have written two smaller works first, one on dreams and portents that foretold the coming to power of Septimius Severus, and another one on Severus' external and internal wars. See Schmidt 1997, 2605–18; Millar 2005, 30f. From 201–211 Dio assembled his sources, to write his great work between 211 and 223. After 223 he added the books on Caracalla, Elagabalus, and Severus Alexander. See Millar 1964, 28–40; idem 2005, 30–5; Schmidt 1997, 2598–638.
- 104 See Cassius Dio 38.36.2; 41.56.1; 44.2.4; 59.9.5; 74.11.3; 78.26.1. See De Blois 1998, 3407.
- 105 Cassius Dio 44.2; 52.30. Cf frg 17.10ff., and 41.29–31. See De Blois 1998–1999, 271; Ash 2006, 147. This hierarchical model of Roman imperial society returns in other sources too. Alföldy 1978, 48: 'Die römische Welt war für den Autor der *Historia Augusta* nicht nur ein politisches System der kaiserlichen Herrschaft, auch nicht nur eine auf religiösen Ideen, intellektuellen Leistungen und Ethik beruhende geistige Wirklichkeit, sondern auch ein soziales Gefüge mit einer beinahe als heilig empfundenen hierarchischen Ordnung.'
- 106 See De Blois 1998–1999, 271. In 52.1–39 Dio stages a dialog between two friends and advisors of Augustus, Agrippa, and Maecenas, in which he comments upon the Roman empire and Roman politics of his own days. On this passage, and especially on the so-called speech of Maecenas in 52.19–39, see Bleicken 1962, 444–67, esp. 447ff.; Millar 1964, 102–18, esp. 104; Ameling 1997, 2479–90; Schettino 2008a, 990–6; idem 2008b, 79–82; Horst 2010, 189–208, and Kemezis 2014, 126–35.
- 107 Kemezis 2014, 139.
- 108 Hidber 2004, 201–7. On Herodian's life and work see Herodian 1.2.5; Whittaker 1969–1970, IX–LXXXII, esp. XLIII, LIff., and LXXIIff.; Alföldy 1989, 240–72; idem 1989, 273–94; Roques 1990, 1–15; Sidebottom 1998, 2775–836; idem in Swain *et al.* 2007, 80–2; Marasco 1998, 2837–927; De Blois 1998, 3415–23; Zimmermann 1999a–c; De Blois 2003, 148–56; Hidber 2004, 201–10; Hartmann in Johnes 2008, I, 30, and Kemezis 2014, 227–72 (especially on his literary qualities). The edition used in this book: C.R. Whittaker, *Herodian* I–II, Loeb, London/Cambridge, MA 1969–1970.
- 109 Kemezis 2014, 227.
- 110 De Blois in idem *et al.* 2003, 149.
- 111 De Blois in idem *et al.* 2003, 150f. See Herodian 2.10.9 about Rome as seat of the empire, in a speech attributed to Septimius Severus. On ethnic characteristics see 1.17.6 (passionate Egyptians), 2.7.9 and 2.10.7 (witty, erratic Syrians who are fond of holidays), 2.9.11 (handsome, brave but slow-witted Pannonians), and 3.2.8 (Greeks, who are naturally inclined to quarrel with one another).
- 112 See PIR² H 104; PLRE I 250, nr. 2; Mennen 2011, 233.
- 113 On Dexippus, his military activities in 267, and his works see Millar 1969, 12–29; Martin 2006, 25–66, 74–150 (the fragments of Dexippus' works); Hartmann in Johnes 2008, I, 24f.; Goltz-Hartmann, *ibidem*, 286, note 275.
- 114 See Martin 2006, 109–37.
- 115 Found on a palimpsest, under some ecclesiastical texts. See Martin and Grusková 2014a, 101–20; idem 2014b, 728–54, and Grusková and Martin 2014 and 2015. The texts reveal that there were two Dexippi: an Athenian local magnate, and a Boiotarch. In the text found on folios 192–193 episodes from the Herulian invasion of AD 267 are treated; the text found on folios 194, 195, and 195v contains pieces of information about Decius' struggle against the Goths and the siege of Philippopolis.
- 116 Strobel 1993, 212, note 182. According to Potter, the oracle in its present form is the work of two people who lived in Syria, could write Greek verse, and hated the Persians. See Potter 1990, 153.

- 117 The Greek text of *Oracula Sibyllina* XIII, with a translation into English, is given by Potter 1990, 166–77.
- 118 See *Paneg. Lat.* 8.10.1–3; 21.2; 9. 4.1. See the edition by Nixon *et al.* 1994, 122–7, 141f., 144, 154. In *Paneg. Lat.* 8.10.1–3 we read that under Gallienus, about 260, the Roman state was dismembered of almost all its limbs, and that at that time the Parthian (*i.e.* Persian) had too lofty pretensions, the Palmyrene claimed equality, Egypt and the Syrias had seceded, Raetia was lost, and Noricum and the Pannonias devastated. The author continues that even Italy herself, mistress of nations, lamented the destruction of many of its cities. In his view, other parts of the empire did not come off any better. In 8.21.1 he speaks about the deserts of Thrace and the empty fields of the Arvii and the Treveri (northern Gaul).
- 119 Edition used in this book: D. Magie, *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* I–III, Loeb, London/Cambridge, MA 1967–1968.
- 120 Kreucher 2003, writing about the emperors Tacitus, Florianus, and Probus, cannot help himself criticizing the *Historia Augusta* throughout his book.
- 121 See Paschoud 1991, 217–69 (Dexippus); Chastagnol 1994, LII–LIX (Marius Maximus) and LXIV–LXVI (Dexippus); Birley 1997 (Marius Maximus). See Burgersdijk 2009, 36f. On Marius Maximus and his work see Birley 1997, 2678–757; Sidebottom in Swain *et al.* 2007, 56f. On his career see Leunissen 1989, 382; PIR² M 308, and Mennen 2011, 109–11. He was an important senator of the Severan period, a loyal supporter of Septimius Severus and his house.
- 122 Birley 2006, 23. On the *Historia Augusta* see among many others Straub 1952; Syme 1968, 211–19; idem 1971, *passim*; Chastagnol 1970; Alföldy 1978, 1–51, esp. 48; Bertrand-Dagenbach 1990, 7 (date of composition), and 68 (late fourth century notions); Kreucher 2003, 19–28; Birley 2006, 19–29; Hartmann, in John 2008, I, 31f., with a lot of references to earlier publications; John in John 2008, I, 45–51, and Burgersdijk 2009.
- 123 On the character of the *Vita Alexandri Severi* see Bertrand-Dagenbach 1990, 189–93. Cf. Molinier Arbo in Carsana and Schettino 2008, 91–105.
- 124 See Körner 2002, 10ff., 28; Kreucher 2003, 15–19; John 2006, 126f. (Aurelius Victor and Eutropius), and Hartmann in John 2008, I, 21. 25f., 28f. S. Aurelius Victor, a senator who became *praefectus urbi* at Rome in 389, c. AD 361 wrote his *Liber de Caesaribus*, short biographies of Roman emperors from Augustus to Constantius II. On his life and career see PLRE I 960, nr. 13; John in John *et al.* 2006, 126. The edition used here is K. Groß-Albenhausen and M. Fuhrmann, *Aurelius Victor, Die römischen Kaiser*, Darmstadt 1997. About AD 400 an anonymous author wrote the so-called *Epitome de Caesaribus* (edition Pichlmayr-Gründel 1966). Eutropius wrote between AD 369 and 371 his *Breviarium ab urbe condita* when he was a *magister memoriae*, and he dedicated the work to the emperor Valens. The edition used here is F. Rühl, *Eutropi breviarium ab urbe condita*, Darmstadt 1975. Almost simultaneously, about 371–2, Festus wrote his *Breviarium rerum gestarum populi Romani*, equally when he was a *magister memoriae* (edition used: J.W. Eadie, *The Breviarium of Festus, a Critical Edition With Historical Commentary*, London 1967. Paulus Orosius (PLRE II 813) was a Spanish presbyter who fled from his country in 414 because of the turmoil caused by Germanic invasions. Augustine, who knew him, incited him to write a Roman history from Christian points of view, the seven books of the *Historiae adversus paganos*, about the period from Adam to AD 417. See Hartmann in John 2008, I, 39, and the publications he cites, to which should be added Cobet 2009, 60–92, but also – especially about Orosius’ sources – Polichetti 2000. Edition used here: K. Zangemeister, *Pauli Orosii adversum paganos*, Leipzig 1889.
- 125 See Burgess 2014.
- 126 In 31.16.9 Ammianus tells us: ‘This is the history of events from the reign of the emperor Nerva to the death of Valens, which I, a former soldier and a Greek [*miles quondam et Graecus*], have composed to the best of my ability. It claims to be the truth, which I have never ventured to pervert either by silence or a lie.’ On Ammianus’

- lost books see Gilliam 1972, 125–47 and Rohrbacher 2006, 106–24. The edition used here is J.C. Rolfe, *Ammianus Marcellinus* I–III, London/Cambridge, MA 1950–1952.
- 127 Kreucher 2003, 31f.; Hartmann in Johnes 2008, I, 27 (Eusebius), 30 (Hieronymus).
- 128 Hartmann in Johnes 2008, I, 27. On p. 28 he is giving a full bibliography. The editions of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* used here are H.J. Lawler, London/Cambridge, MA 1964 and G. Bardy, Paris 1955.
- 129 Hartmann in Johnes 2008, 44. On Zosimus and his work see Paschoud 1971, IX–XCV. Edition used here: F. Paschoud, *Zosime, Histoire Nouvelle* I, Paris 1971.
- 130 On Petrus Patricius see PLRE III 994ff., nr. 6. The fragments of his work: FHG IV, pp. 181–91 (FHG: see the list of abbreviations).
- 131 Hartmann in Johnes 2008, I, 22f., 40f. Cf. Bleckmann 1992, 51f.
- 132 On Ioannes Antiochenus see PLRE III 711, nr. 299.
- 133 Bleckmann 1992, 46–8; Hartmann in Johnes 2008, I, 32.
- 134 Adler 1989, 132–58; Bleckmann 1992, 41–3; Hartmann in Johnes 2008, I, 42f. The text used here: W. Adler and P. Tuffin, *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History From the Creation*, Oxford 2002. The main edition still is the one by Dindorf, Bonn 1829.
- 135 Hartmann in Johnes 2008, I, 21f.
- 136 See Bleckmann 1992, 1–43; Hartmann in Johnes 2008, I, 43. The edition used here is the one by L. Dindorf, Leipzig 1868–1875. There is a translation into English: Th. Bancich and E.N. Lane, *The History of Zonaras From Alexander Severus to the Death of Theodosius the Great*, London/New York, NY 2009.
- 137 On high classical law see Ibbetson in CAH XII, 2005, 184–99. On the classical jurists Papinian, Ulpian, Paul, and Modestinus see De Blois 2001b, 136–41; idem 2015, 226–8; Honoré 2004, 111–15.
- 138 Available under www.iuscivile.com.
- 139 Millar 1992, 228.
- 140 On these sources see Ehling and Hartmann in Johnes 2008, I, 53–8.
- 141 The term ‘career-inscriptions’ accurately describes the main contents of many of such texts, but may not be a correct definition. A better term might be ‘honorary texts.’ See Eck in Haensch 2009, 79–92.
- 142 On the epigraphic habit and its decline see MacMullen 1982, 233–46, esp. 243ff.; Witschel 2004, 257; idem in Bolle *et al.* 2017, 33–53 (the numbers declined since the first half of the third century and in Late Antiquity inscriptions got different functions; the epigraphical ‘landscape’ changed). In Aphrodisias in western Asia Minor, a town not situated in a ‘crisis area,’ the production of inscriptions decreased from 1,500 in the period from 50 BC to AD 250, to just 250 in the years 250–550. See Roueché 1989, 20; Rich 1992, 4–6. The inscriptions on the so-called archive-wall stop under the reign of Gordian III (see Chaniotis in De Blois *et al.* 2003, 251). Roueché 1981, 103: ‘the latest securely datable inscription from the period before the accession of Diocletian so far published (at Aphrodisias, LdB) is a dedication to Salonina.’
- 143 Woolf 1996, 22–39.
- 144 Griesbach in Faust and Leitmer 2011, 77–110.
- 145 Alföldy 2000, 54.
- 146 The name *Res Gestae Divi Saporis* was given to this inscription by Michael Rostovtzeff, one of the first editors, in analogy to a famous inscription of the emperor Augustus, the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* or *Monumentum Ancyranum*. See Rostovtzeff 1943–1944, 17–60. The RGDS is a trilingual inscription by Shapur I on the Ka’aba-i-Zardust (abbreviated SKZ). See Honigsmann and Maricq 1952; Kettenhofen 1982, and Huyse 1999. A translation into English is given by Hekster 2008, 112–14.
- 147 On papyrological corpora and tools see Gagos and Potter 2006, 53f. On papyri from Mesopotamia see Feissel and Gascou 1995, Feissel, Gascou, and Teixidor 1997, and Feissel and Gascou 2000.
- 148 Egypt may have been a closed currency area (Duncan-Jones 1994, 43), but it was not that much standing by itself that it could not be compared with any other provinces.

- Data from Egypt may be used to explain empire-wide developments. See Bagnall and Frier 1994, 171; Drecoll 1997, 269, 354; Jördens in Eck 1999, 180. On the municipalization of Egypt during Severus' visit to Egypt (AD 200), see Bowman 1971, 121–3; idem 1986, 67–71; idem in CAH XII, 2005, 318.
- 149 Lee 2007, 65. On the significance of numismatic source material see Rowan 2012, 19–31.
- 150 Wallace-Hadrill 1986, 69. In 1.9.7 Herodian tells us that Perennis' plotting against Commodus was discovered when some soldiers found coins that had Perennis' portrait on them.
- 151 See Levick 1982, 104–16; idem 1999, 41–60. See Rowan 2012, 19–23.
- 152 Kemmers 2006, *passim*; Manders and Hekster in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 136f.; Manders 2012, 6f. On coinage as an important source of knowledge see Howgego 1995, 62–87, esp. 77; Legutko 2000, 15–25; Noreña 2001, 146–65, esp. 146f.; Hekster 2015, 31.
- 153 Göbl 2000 and Geiger 2013, 200–47.
- 154 See Hekster 2015, 33f.
- 155 On this battle see Berger *et al.* 2010/ 2013, 313–402; Pöppelmann *et al.* 2013.
- 156 Witschel 1999, 239–374.
- 157 Witschel 2004, 259f. Cf. Jongman in Bowman and Wilson 2009, 122f. See Mattingly in Bowman and Wilson 2009, 167–72, esp. 171.
- 158 Giardina 1993, III 1; Potter 2004; CAH XII² 2005; Christol 2006a; Ando 2012, and Johnes 2008, I–II (just the period AD 235–284). See also Kulikowski 2016. A very accessible survey, also for a general audience, is O.J. Hekster, *Rome and Its Empire*, Edinburgh 2008.
- 159 See Alföldi 1967, 228–84.
- 160 Weber 1922.
- 161 Liebeschuetz 2015, 29, the first page of his article on transformation and decline of the classical city in the later Roman empire (*ibidem* pp. 29–53, previously published in Krause and Witschel 2006, 463–83).
- 162 See Banaji 2001, 101–33 ('The changing balance of rural power'), esp. 115.
- 163 Adams in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 284ff.
- 164 For a similar definition see Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 30.
- 165 On Cyprian's work as a source for awareness of the third-century crisis see Alföldy 1989, 295–318 (idem 1973, 479–501, plus *Nachträge*).
- 166 See RIC V 1, 42 nr. 50; 47 nrs. 116–19; 50 nr. 149; 51 nrs 171f. (Valerian), and 82 nr. 164; 86 nrs 234–6 (Gallienus, joint reign). On RIC V 1, 55 nr. 220 (Valerian) and 91 nr. 296 (Gallienus), the *legendum* on the reverse is *restitutor generis humani*.
- 167 CIL XIII 7844 (AD 238). See Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 33f.
- 168 Homo 1913, 1–22, 225–67; Rostovtzeff 1923, 233–42. Concise histories of the debate were recently published by Thomas Gerhardt in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 382–410, by Géza Alföldy, in the revised edition of his *Römische Sozialgeschichte*, Stuttgart 2011, 254–72, by Wolfgang Liebeschuetz in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 11–20, and by Michael Sommer in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 15–30.
- 169 Rostovtzeff 1957², 448f. See Sommer in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 20.
- 170 Rémondon 1964; Alföldy 1974a; MacMullen 1976. Cf. Duncan-Jones 2004, 20ff.; Nollé in Johnes 2006, 271–87.
- 171 Alföldy 1974a, 98–103 (Alföldy 1989, 328–33).
- 172 Like MacMullen, Le Bohec 1994, 194–200 emphasizes the importance of wars and armies during the decades after AD 235. In his view the nadir of the crisis was the period of Valerian and Gallienus, 253–68.
- 173 MacMullen 1976, 1f.
- 174 Eich, A., in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 113–27.
- 175 See Strobel 1993, 285–97 and 299–348; Witschel 1999, 239–374 (Italy, the Iberian Peninsula, North Africa, Gaul, the Germanies, Raetia, and Britain), and 375–7; idem 2004, 251–5; idem in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 145–62 (North Africa). See also Rathbone 1991, 403; idem 1997, 183–244 (Egypt) and Ruffing in Johnes 2006, 223–41 (Egypt)

- and southern Asia Minor). For some critical comments on the ideas of Strobel and Witschel see Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 25ff. A nuanced view is given by Geiger 2013, 301–17.
- 176 Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 29f. In the preface to a volume edited by Marie-Henriette Quet, Andrea Giardina attacks the minimalizing of the third-century crisis, saying: ‘Les interprétations minimalistes de la crise du III^e siècle, proposées surtout ces dernières années, sont viciées par des procédés discutables; ces interprétations se fondent tout d’abord sur une méthode de démontage qui examine les données, une à la fois, dans le but de les juger individuellement peu significatives, négligeant de la sorte la cohésion de la situation globale’ (Giardina in Quet 2006, 16). A critical review of Strobel’s and Witschel’s ideas was also formulated by Géza Alföldy, in Alföldy 2011a, 259–72.
- 177 Liebeschuetz in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 17. The article was also published in Liebeschuetz 2015, 19–28.
- 178 See Sommer in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 16–23.
- 179 De Blois in idem 2002, 204–17; De Blois in Johnes 2006, 25–36 and Alföldy 2011a, 262f. Cf. Christol 1975, 825–7 and Lo Cascio 1999, 393–418, esp. 410ff. (crisis from AD 249 onwards). Michel Christol arranges his chapters in his book of 2006 in the following way: 67–116 (*La puissance de Rome à l’épreuve*, AD 226–249), 117–72 (*Crises et bouleversements*, AD 249–274), 173–190 (*Une lente reprise*, AD 274–284). In a recently published monograph about the emperor Gallienus, Michael Geiger concedes that the third quarter of the third century should be characterized as a time of crisis. See Geiger 2013, 301.
- 180 See Speidel, M.A., in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 46–8.

2 Wars

2.1. Escalation, crisis, and recovery

If anything, the period from 193 to 284 AD was an age of wars, particularly from 230 onwards. But also before that year wars and usurpations occurred with some regularity, especially at the beginning of this age, from 193 to 200. After 230, and particularly after 249, many regions of the Roman empire became involved in fighting and ensuing devastation, either because external enemies made incursions into the empire, or because pretenders to the throne fought one another. Not all external wars were successful. Roman emperors lost their lives or were taken prisoner, Roman armies were decimated by effective opponents such as the Persians or the Goths, and many invading raiders were not stopped in border regions, but were only defeated when they were returning home, loaded with booty and kidnapped people. The empire was not permanently on the defense, though. Every now and then Roman emperors took the initiative and attacked enemies, but even so the inhabitants of the empire had to pay for eventual extra costs, and to make up for the losses in manpower and materiel that imperial armies had sustained, particularly when such expeditions went awry.

In a study of imperial power and its sources, wars are extremely important. Warfare within the borders of the empire could very well result in a loss of tax returns, and in a diminishing output of imperial domains, and would in this way have a negative impact on economic imperial power. Unsuccessful extended, almost chronic, warfare in Roman territories could undermine the imperial monopoly of violence, through local initiatives by lower commanders collecting groups of surviving Roman soldiers or via self-help by communities that were threatened by plundering bands. Unsuccessful warfare, especially when combined with epidemics, could also rapidly diminish the fighting qualities of Roman armies, and thus undermine imperial military power. On the basis of studies about similar diseases in later times scholars came to the conclusion that the plague first and foremost hit mobile younger men, such as the military, and defeats took away experienced soldiers who had to be replaced by recruits or emergency levies.¹ In a period in which emperors were constantly represented as perennial conquerors and victors, lost wars and battles undoubtedly diminished imperial authority, and consequently led to usurpations and devastating internecine warfare within parts of the empire. Emperors who were not permanently

victorious and were losing soldiers, money, and supplies became vulnerable to mutinies by hungry soldiers and to coups by military leaders who were supposed to do better.

2.2. The Severan era from AD 193 to 230

Until AD 230 the Severan era was not a period of long-winded simultaneous external wars in more than one part of the empire, and without the heavy losses and devastations resulting from repeated or even continuous raiding into the Roman empire. From about AD 200 onwards, the Severan period was a time of redress after the great wars that had afflicted the Roman empire under Marcus Aurelius (AD 161–180) and during the years of war following the death of Commodus (AD 193–199), and after the Antonine plague, a pandemic that had started in AD 166 and may have lasted up to about 190 or even later.²

In January 193 Publius Helvius Pertinax succeeded the emperor Commodus who had been murdered at the very end of 192.³ Quite a few senators must have frowned at Pertinax' lowly origins, for his father had been a freed slave, and he himself had started his career as a school teacher.⁴ Pertinax had been one of Marcus Aurelius' favorites, though; he had made a dashing career from the *tres militiae* to the consulate within just ten years, between AD 165 and 175, and had been one of Marcus' successful military leaders. In 192 he was *praefectus urbi* and *consul ordinarius iterum*, the highest rank in a senatorial career.⁵ Contemporary authors such as Cassius Dio were aware that war could promote careers of such able, specialized careerists of obscure origins and backgrounds. In 71.22.1, speaking about Pertinax, he says:

When Pertinax as a reward for his brave exploits obtained the consulship, there were nevertheless some who showed displeasure in view of the fact that he was of obscure family, and they quoted this line from tragedy: such things accursed war brings in its train (Euripides, *Suppl.* 119). Little did they realize that he was to be emperor as well.

Among the military at the northern borders Pertinax may have had a good reputation (Herodian 2.9.8) but his meanness and severity were not accepted by the soldiery of the praetorian guard in Rome.⁶ At the end of March 193 he was killed by rebellious praetorians. In 2.2.5 Herodian says about these soldiers: 'they were expected to be totally against accepting a rule of moderation since they had grown used to a tyrant (*i.e.* Commodus) as their master and were experts in pillage and violence,' and he adds that in January 193 they had only accepted Pertinax because their arms were not at hand and many of the Roman populace were standing by. Is this a biased remark? Herodian disliked the soldiery and regularly depicts them in dark colors, but Pertinax may have relied too much on his military fame, and may have underestimated the guard's loyalty towards the Antonine family and their disappointment at his financial frugality.⁷

Through a degrading and shameful procedure, the imperial throne was sold by the praetorians to the highest bidder, Didius Iulianus, who became Pertinax' successor.⁸ He had made a successful senatorial career but this was not enough to establish his authority as an emperor, and compensate for the way in which he had come to the throne.⁹ On one of his coins he called himself *rector orbis*, but this was over-optimistic.¹⁰ Soon, on 9 April 193, the governor of Pannonia Superior, Septimius Severus, proclaimed himself emperor, as almost simultaneously Pescennius Niger did in his province of Syria. Another potential pretender, Clodius Albinus, the governor of Britain, allied with Severus who appointed him *caesar*, i.e. successor designate.¹¹ Severus was a clever usurper. In 2.9.7 Herodian tells us:

The first thing Severus did was to make overtures to small groups of legionary commanders and tribunes and senior centurions, discussing with them the ruinous state of the empire, brought about because there was no noble or worthy leader to control it.

Apparently he knew the value of the military middle cadre in influencing his army. Having proclaimed himself emperor he sent messages to other nearby provincial governors, with success (Herodian 2.9.12 and 10.1). He also minted a series of 'legionary coins,' which proclaimed the loyalty towards him of most of the legions in the Danube and Rhine areas.¹² Subsequently Severus and his army rapidly marched into Italy, via Emona, Aquileia, and Ravenna. In Italy the various communities took his side, and so he was able to get supplies from them and march quickly into Rome before Didius Iulianus could organize his defenses. Didius' reign ended on 1 July, and his life one day later.¹³ That Rome was so quickly taken was important enough, for marching on Rome was ideologically problematic, and a siege of the *urbs* would have been even worse.¹⁴ Even so, that Rome was occupied by Severus' soldiers was bad enough. In 74.16.2 Cassius Dio – who was not an enemy of Severus – disapprovingly remarked that the city of Rome became a military camp, in the enemy's country as it were. Not all of this 'militarization' of Rome disappeared after the initial phase of Severus' reign. As Alexandra Busch makes clear, under his rule the number of soldiers stationed directly in and around Rome was nearly quadrupled, which may be interpreted as a demonstration of military power, to the detriment of the influence of the populace of Rome.¹⁵ An intelligent guess is that clashes between soldiers and populace in this way became nearly inevitable. During the first half of the third century the city of Rome was to witness several of them.

Septimius Severus was accepted as Iulianus' successor on the first of July 193. He had Pertinax deified,¹⁶ and started to include his name (*cognomen*) within his own official imperial titulature. Furthermore, Severus propitiated the senators, among others by a donation in gold and a promise not to persecute them.¹⁷ A sign of a still transactional form of leadership. Key positions in the armed forces and the administration were given by Severus to reliable supporters.¹⁸ Some trusted military men could make spectacular careers.¹⁹ The praetorian

guard, which had ended Pertinax's life and reign, was disgracefully dismissed, but the other soldiers received a handsome donative.²⁰ A new praetorian guard was selected from Severus' 'Illyrian' troops (Herodian 2.14.5). An indication that this was what actually happened is given by the number of military diplomas for retiring praetorians, which rose steeply from 202 onwards. Werner Eck convincingly argues that the only explanation of this phenomenon is the need felt by retiring 'new' praetorians to take home a *diploma* which proved their status and the civil rights of their female consorts whom they now could marry in full *matrimonium*. Former Italian praetorians, coming from regions where Roman citizenship was widespread, had not so much felt this need.²¹ In 75.2.5–6 Cassius Dio criticizes Severus for having ousted the Italian youth from the praetorian guard, recruiting selected legionaries instead, saying that it became only too apparent that he (= Severus) had ruined the youth of Italy, who turned to brigandage and gladiatorial fighting in place of their former service in the army (the praetorian guard), and that he had filled the city with a throng of motley soldiers most savage in appearance, most terrifying in speech, and most boorish in conversation.²² This is not right, for Italian recruits could in Italy itself enlist in one of Severus' new legions, *legio II Parthica*, encamped at Monte Albano, near Rome.²³ What is right is that Severus in this way diminished the number of Italian military who through service in the praetorian guard could become centurions and *primi pili* elsewhere.²⁴ And the rift between guardsmen and populace may indeed have become wider in Rome. Sandra Bingham argues that there were incidents in the early third century that highlight the problem of ordinary soldiers as praetorians in the city. Guardsmen were involved in clashes with the civilian population early in the reign of Severus Alexander, in murdering Ulpian (223), and in offending Cassius Dio who was forced to spend the period of his second consulate outside Rome (229) because Pannonian relatives of praetorian soldiers had been complaining about his severity and old-fashioned disciplinary habits.²⁵ In 238 populace and praetorians fought each other bitterly.²⁶

Soon after Severus' coming to power there was fighting between the forces of Septimius Severus and his competitor Pescennius Niger, first at Byzantium, which had been taken by Niger's troops, and only fell to a besieging Severan army after a protracted siege (193–195).²⁷ Niger had at his disposal a sizeable army, which became even bigger through recruiting in Asia Minor and Antioch, which had taken sides with Niger. Niger also tried to get support from the Parthian Empire, the principality of Hatra, and the kingdom of Armenia. The Armenians did not react but the Parthian king took Niger's side, which was of no avail because the Parthian forces were as always slow in mobilizing. Hatra sent a force of archers.²⁸ By supporting Niger both Parthia and Hatra incurred Severus' enmity. It seems that Niger was also supported by the Adiabeni and some Arabs.²⁹ Severus and his generals commanded the armies of the Danube and the forces of Italy, where he also had recruited new soldiers (Herodian 2.14.6), but they had to leave behind a good part of this impressive military strength, to cover their back and prevent raids and inroads from outside the empire. Nonetheless Severus may have taken with him a large army, more numerous than Niger's.

In the opening phases of this civil war Niger was fairly successful: his troops could occupy Byzantium, and beat some Severan advance detachments. In subsequent military actions in Asia Minor and at Issus in 193–194 Niger's forces were, however, defeated by Severus' generals,³⁰ and at the end of this campaign remnants of Niger's troops fled over the eastern borders to the Parthian empire. According to Herodian, they taught the Parthians how to fight better at close quarters, to the detriment of later Roman armies.³¹ By 13 February 194 Severus was recognized as emperor in Egyptian papyrus texts.³² The campaign had been relatively short, but had taken many soldiers' lives. In 75.8.1 Cassius Dio tells us that in the aftermath of Niger's defeat in Syria alone 20,000 men had perished. This may be exaggerated, but it nevertheless indicates that Dio or his informants had the impression that this had been a costly, bloody war. The province of Syria was divided into two, Syria Coele and Syria Phoenice (the southern half).³³

In the spring of 195 a Roman army, led by Severus himself and his staff of trusted, experienced military leaders successfully invaded Mesopotamia, probably to help Nisibis and fight the Osrhoeni, Adiabeni, and Arabs who had supported Niger. It seems that he now established a new province, called Osrhoene or Mesopotamia, which comprised most of newly conquered Northern Mesopotamia, but not Edessa, which stayed under the sway of the Abgarid dynasty. Whether Severus attacked the Parthians too is not very clear, but it does not seem very likely that he did, although on coins he was honored as Parthicus, Arabicus, and Adiabenicus.³⁴ It seems that Severus now also changed his dynastic policy; from the spring of 195 onwards he styled himself as son of Marcus Aurelius and brother of Commodus, thus aligning himself with a long dynastic continuity and legitimacy. Commodus was consecrated.³⁵ Severus' imperial representation got a stronger dynastic character. His wife received the title *mater castrorum*, like Faustina junior under Marcus Aurelius, and his son Antoninus (nicknamed Caracalla) was appointed *caesar*, which must have provoked Severus' former 'caesar' Albinus to rebellion and civil war.³⁶ From now onwards Severus started to emphasize his own dynasty, his *domus divina*, consisting of himself, his second wife Iulia Domna, and their sons Antoninus (Caracalla) and Geta.³⁷ In 196 the emperor traveled back to Rome, via Byzantium, which had fallen into his hands at the end of 195, and was now severely punished. Its walls were destroyed, and the city became a village in the territory of nearby pro-Severan Perinthus, just as Antioch, which had also supported Niger, had become a village in the *chora* of neighboring pro-Severan Laodicea.³⁸

Having returned to Rome, Severus stayed there briefly and did some long overdue administrative work. According to Anthony Birley, quite a few of his rescripts date back to the second half of 196, particularly to the months October to December, whereas the *Codex Iustinianus* has only a few rescripts by Severus from 195 or the first months of 196.³⁹ From the last months of 196 Severus turned his attention to another war, the one against Albinus in the west, to the dismay of the populace of Rome, which in the circus started to complain about wars following one another without any intervals (Cassius Dio 75.4.4f.). Albinus

had only his own legions and *auxilia* from Britain and the Spanish legion at his side, but nonetheless the war that Severus started against him at the end of 196 turned out to be a difficult one, causing heavy losses on both sides, especially in the hard-fought battle at Lyon, in February 197.⁴⁰ Severus won, and Lyon was thoroughly plundered by his troops. Albinus' legions of Britain and Spain must have sustained the heaviest losses, but other units must have lost many men too. After Albinus' demise fighting was not over. One of Severus' loyal generals, the senator Claudius Candidus, had as a *dux terra marique* to fight *rebelles et hostes publicos* in Spain.⁴¹ Another loyal supporter, the senator Virius Lupus, who had been consul before 197, was sent to Britain to put that province in order, purge the staffs of the military units, and make good the losses sustained in Gaul.⁴² In 3.8.2 Herodian states that Britain was divided into two provinces immediately after Albinus' defeat, but this splitting up took place under Caracalla, probably in 213.⁴³ According to Géza Alföldy, this emperor also divided Hispania Tarraconensis, but about 235 or 238 the old situation was restored there.⁴⁴

After his victory Severus planned another Parthian campaign. He increased his army by taking detachments from the four Rhine legions with him,⁴⁵ which was a clever thing to do. Those soldiers, who had probably sympathized with Albinus, now could not fall on his back. Still he had to replenish the ranks of his armies through enlisting new soldiers, as he probably also had done between his campaigns. One indication for his recruiting activities is to be found in the career of Cn. Marcius Rustius Rufinus from Beneventum, a knight belonging to a family of local landed proprietors, who just before becoming *primus pilus his* was a *dilectator regionis Transpadanae*, a recruiting officer in North Italy, north of the river Po.⁴⁶ One sector that needed replenishing was the Danube frontier, which had yielded many men to Severus' field armies and his new praetorian guard. Besides, he had to compensate for the many losses that his own armies and those of Niger and Albinus had sustained during the civil wars,⁴⁷ and find recruits for his new *legiones Parthicae* I, II, and III, in a post-plague period, in which workers as always in such periods could demand higher wages, prices had been rising, and demographic recovery at best was just taking off.⁴⁸ This may be the reason why Severus now, in 197, doubled the soldiers' pay, and gave the military some new privileges. According to Herodian 3.8.5 they got – among others – the right to stay with their female consorts. In an article published in 2011 Werner Eck demonstrates that Severus did not abolish the marriage ban, in other words did not give the soldiers the right to have a *matrimonium iustum*. They just got *consuetudo*, which mitigated the harsh obligation to always live in the barracks.⁴⁹ In this way Severus tried to induce good recruits to join the forces and to compensate the soldiery for the rise in prices in the last quarter of the second century, but consequently added an enormous amount to state expenditure.⁵⁰ According to Richard Duncan-Jones, about three quarters of the state budget was spent on the defenses of the empire and the soldiers' pay, and so a rise in military pay would have enormous financial consequences.⁵¹ Besides this doubling of military pay was to put heavy pressure on silver reserves, because the soldiers were now paid in silver currency, no longer in other, less costly metal.⁵²

Another consequence was that the prosperity of military personnel may have increased, and its status may have been enhanced.⁵³ This would have particularly applied to the higher ranks. According to Michael Speidel a *miles legionis* now received an annual salary of 2,800 sesterces instead of 1,400, a *miles cohortis* (an auxiliary) got HS 2,000 instead of 1,000, and cavalrymen received 2,400 (*equites cohortis*) or 2,800 (*equites alae*) sesterces instead of 1,200 and 1,400 respectively, but a legionary centurion got 36,000 sesterces per annum instead of 18,000, a centurion of an auxiliary cohort HS 10,000 instead of 5,000, and a *primus pilus* from now onwards earned the handsome sum of HS 144,000 instead of 72,000, thus coming nearer to procuratorial salaries.⁵⁴ In my view it is not outlandish to suppose that also in those times there was a connection between salaries and status. It seems that with the change in the social status of the soldiers came a change in the design of sepulchral sculptures on military gravestones. According to Alexandra Busch, at least in and around Rome the troops displayed a significantly greater self-confidence on their monuments and actively demonstrated their ranks and significance.⁵⁵

This was not all. During the Severan period, probably under Septimius Severus himself, a new system for supplying the Roman army was developed, the so-called *annona militaris*. Under this new system, rations were issued to soldiers without the deductions from their pay that had been standard throughout the republican and early imperial periods. The food needed was raised in kind regularly, above all for mobile armies, as Fritz Mitthof makes clear. This *annona* did not replace taxation in money, but came on top of it when needed. Nor did it replace military pay in money. Under Diocletian this *annona* developed to a regular tax in kind. The foodstuffs that were needed were raised in a broader region than just along the transit routes, even in entire provinces and neighboring areas,⁵⁶ and could be delivered to the storehouses that formed an ever more institutionalized infrastructure in border regions and in the interior of the empire.⁵⁷

Much of the extra money Severus now needed must have come from booty he made in the east and from widespread confiscations that he set in motion after the demise of his opponents. In 75.8.4 Cassius Dio tells us that he spared the foremost senators but slew 29 others of them.⁵⁸ One of Severus' henchmen may have been Marcus Aquilius Felix who was a centurion with the *frumentarii* and subsequently made a wonderful career. According to Brian Dobson, he was the centurion who in 193 had been sent out by Didius Iulianus to murder Septimius Severus but had defected to the Severan camp.⁵⁹ Another henchman was probably Marcus Oclatinus Adventus who had been a *speculator* (scout), and had served in the *castra peregrina*, the Rome-based camp of the *frumentarii*. In 197 he became *primus pilus*, then to make a good career. In 217 this career soldier was one of the two praetorian prefects.⁶⁰ Severus condemned to death many rich senators who reputedly had supported Albinus, and many *proceres* in the western provinces as well.⁶¹ This wave of terror mainly hit North Africa, Spain, and Gaul. According to Anthony Birley, an analysis of the names of the senators put to death reveals that more than a third were closely connected by birth or by property ownership with proconsular Africa, Albinus' homeland,

and others were linked with Gaul and Spain.⁶² Properties were confiscated to such an extent that Severus needed specially appointed procurators, *procuratores ad bona damnatorum*, to administer them.⁶³ One very experienced man, Ti. Claudius Xenophon from Ephesus, after a long procuratorial career, became *procurator Augusti ad bona cogenda in Africa*, another indication that in this province confiscations must have been widespread.⁶⁴ In the western provinces confiscations may have uprooted traditional relations of power and patronage. There is not much evidence, but it is clear that the imperial domains must have grown, at least in all provinces that used to send senators to Rome, and even more so in the western provinces, and that at least two of Severus' friends, Fabius Cilo and Plautianus, his praetorian prefect, now received sizeable estates, Cilo in Spain and Plautianus probably in his homeland Proconsular Africa.⁶⁵ Although we have to be careful with conclusions because of a scarcity of evidence about western, especially Iberian, élites, it is only reasonable to suppose that the numbers of actual or potential western senators and *equites* must have decreased by these condemnations and confiscations. Inge Mennen convincingly shows that the Severan senate after the civil wars of 193–197 mainly existed of Italians, Africans, men from Asia Minor, and some easterners, and may have stayed this way well into the second half of the third century.⁶⁶ Severus did not only punish senators, he also gave them an important privilege, freeing them from the obligation to host traveling government persons, military included.⁶⁷

Another source of extra income was debasement of the coinage, especially the silver *denarius*.⁶⁸ According to Gitler and Ponting, the silver content of this coin denomination had dropped to a new low of 46 per cent as early as AD 194. Mir-eille Corbier estimates that Severus reduced the fineness of the *denarius* by about one third.⁶⁹ More coins to one unit of silver procured more money to give to the soldiers in silver coinage. Opinions vary widely as to what kind of coin metal was used to pay the armies, but it seems that, from the reign of Septimius Severus onward, gold and silver coinage were dominant means to pay the military forces.⁷⁰ In regions where local mints existed military pay was frequently changed into local bronze coins. Silver and gold coins were not frequently used in market places, and so military men had to change money into local bronze coinage. According to Michael Crawford, in Syria about 30 towns produced local bronze coins under Severus and Caracalla, probably to help the emperors when they were fighting in nearby regions.⁷¹ This was a normal procedure until Valerian and Gallienus changed the system and discontinued local minting.⁷² Caracalla showed that he realized how important the cities in Asia Minor were for him. According to Anna Heller, this emperor distributed more *neokoros* titles to cities in Asia Minor than any of his predecessors had done.⁷³

Severus did not spend much time in Rome. Before the end of the summer (197), having celebrated his victory, he left for the east on campaign against the Parthians, probably to eliminate their influence in northern Mesopotamia. Severus was not successful in his protracted siege of Hatra, an Arab state that bordered on newly conquered Roman territory, and was considered to be a pro-Parthian kingdom.⁷⁴ Perhaps his army had to give up the siege because too many

soldiers had fallen ill, or because Hatra was very strong, situated as it was at the very top of a precipitous ridge and because it was teeming with archers, as Herodian says in 3.9.4; but there is another, more plausible reason. In the second century AD, between 117 and 170, Hatra had quickly become important as the central place and cultic center of the tribes that were living in a fairly wide region surrounding it.⁷⁵ So anyone who started to besiege Hatra had to reckon with stiff resistance among those tribes, and could not easily forage in their territories. In the autumn of 197 there was some success, though, because part of the Roman army rapidly moved to the Parthian capital Ctesiphon and sacked it. In 3.9.9 Herodian tells us a fairly mythical story about this military action: by accident a Roman fleet floated to the Parthian side of the river, went on to Ctesiphon and took it. The Parthian king Vologaeses III, beset with rebellion and family dissensions, gave up and Severus celebrated his victory in February 198.⁷⁶ He did not follow up his successes in the Parthian empire, but instead resumed the siege of Hatra, again in vain,⁷⁷ Severus concluded a peace treaty with its king and consolidated the province of Mesopotamia, which received two legions, the *legiones Parthicae* I and III, both under equestrian *praefecti legionis*. Like Egypt this province was to be governed by an equestrian prefect.⁷⁸

Severus did not yet return to Rome. He stayed in Syria in 198–199, and then went to Egypt, among other things to reorganize its administrative structures and squeeze more money and supplies out of it. He may even have unleashed a persecution of the Christians in this province.⁷⁹ Major Egyptian communities, among them Alexandria, now received councils, *boulai*, which had to raise imperial taxes and military supplies. The system of liturgies (obligatory burdens) that used to go hand in hand with municipalization had of course come into existence much earlier, in the early decades of the Principate.⁸⁰ After a stay in Syria (200–202), Severus at last returned to Rome, to celebrate his successes and his *decennalia*, in April 202.⁸¹ At the same time he had his son Caracalla marry the daughter of his friend, ally, and praetorian prefect Plautianus.⁸²

After a voyage to North Africa, where he did some campaigning, and added luster to his home town Lepcis Magna,⁸³ Severus spent some years in Rome. The main events in this period were the celebration of the *decennalia* (202), the *ludi saeculares* (204), the fall of Plautianus (205), and the rivalry between his sons Caracalla and Geta.⁸⁴ Plautianus, an African such as Severus himself, had been one of Severus' loyal friends and allies, but as a praetorian prefect he usurped too much power, and aroused the enmity of Caracalla, his son-in-law, who successfully staged a coup against him. Plautianus was accused by Caracalla's tutor and three centurions of having ordered ten centurions, these three included, to kill both Severus and Caracalla (Cassius Dio 76.3.2). Again we see the important role of military middle cadre in staging coups or usurpations. Severus believed Caracalla's partisans, and the latter had Plautianus slain by an attendant.⁸⁵ Plautilla had to go into exile to Lipara, where she was murdered in 211.⁸⁶ Plautianus' properties were confiscated. They were so large that a *procurator ad bona Plautiani* was needed to administer them.⁸⁷ This was another welcome source of income to Severus.

In 208–211 Severus and his sons were campaigning in Britain, Albinus' home base, to increase the military fame of Geta and Caracalla, get them to co-operate with one another, and establish Severan authority in a recently rebellious area and among rapacious tribes that lived to the north of Hadrian's wall. This expedition did not result in gains or losses of any consequence. A couple of years later the province was divided into two, just as Syria had been in AD 194 or 195. In this way the large garrisons of these two provinces were split up, to the detriment of potential usurpers who would no longer be able to mobilize large armies quickly on their own initiative alone.⁸⁸ Severus died at York, in 211. In 76.15.2 Cassius Dio credits him with the following last words to his sons: 'Be harmonious, enrich the soldiers, and scorn all other men.' In spite of all his great expenditures, not only on the military and grandiose displays of power, such as his *decennalia*, but also on building in Rome, the emperor left some surplus money to his sons.⁸⁹

Severus' sons did not follow his first advice, but continued their rivalry, now on the imperial throne, thereby jeopardizing the stability of the empire. As Clifford Ando demonstrates, consensus within the imperial family was ideologically important. One could add that this was even more so since Severus in the representation of imperial power had more than ever emphasized his dynasty, his *domus divina*, and the concord within the ruling family that stood model for the concord in the empire and was producing victory and prosperity.⁹⁰ Besides dissension at the top would propagate itself into enmities and rivalries at practically all levels of the imperial administration, in administering justice, in the city of Rome, and eventually within the armed forces, because each of the rival brothers would promote their own friends, whenever the question of an appointment to a military or civil post came up.⁹¹ According to Herodian 4.4.1–2, in trials they held conflicting views, and at shows and games they backed opposing factions. The escalating struggle between the brothers might even have something to do with rivalry among two powerful factions at court that had started already under Severus, as Fleur Kemmers argues.⁹² In the end, in 212, Caracalla had his brother murdered, and rushed to the nearby military camp, sacrificed there to the gods in an act of thanksgiving (Herodian 4.4.5), and gave the soldiers a large donative and a 50 per cent structural increase in pay to win their support, thus adding another substantial burden to imperial expenditure.⁹³ Besides, to impress people in Rome and abroad and enhance his imperial representation, Caracalla started to build enormous, richly adorned baths; an initiative that was not cheap either. They were finished under Severus Alexander.⁹⁴ On the positive side of his balance sheet stood the proceeds of the wave of terror that he unleashed after he had eliminated his brother Geta, and the profits he earned by introducing a new coin, called the *antoninianus*, which nominally had the value of two *denarii*, at a fineness of about one and a half. The weight of the *aureus* was lowered by about 9.3 per cent, from 45 to 50 to the pound.⁹⁵ Whether this was enough to compensate for his reckless spending is a matter of doubt.

Of the imperial freedmen and soldiers who had been with Geta he immediately put to death some 20,000, Cassius Dio tells us (77.4.1), which may be an exaggerated number, and he slew various distinguished men also, including the

praetorian prefects, the famous jurists Papinian and Patruinus, Severus' friend Fabius Cilo, the son of the short-lived emperor Pertinax, and some surviving descendants of Marcus Aurelius, thus eliminating potential rivals who would have valuable dynastic roots. Confiscating their properties, he added substantial means to his budget.⁹⁶ This conflict between Severus' sons, having lingered on for quite a while, had become important and widespread, as is to be seen in the fierceness of Caracalla's subsequent actions and in the thoroughgoing character of the *damnatio memoriae* that was meted out to Geta. The monumental remains of Caracalla's fratricide were – and are still – visible to anybody in the center of Rome. Geta's name has been chiseled away from the inscription on the triumphal arch of Septimius Severus that is still standing on the Forum Romanum, and has been replaced by additional titles for Septimius Severus and Caracalla.⁹⁷ In a papyrus text Caracalla calls himself *eusebestatos*, whereas he libeled Geta as *asebestatos*.⁹⁸ Geta's *damnatio memoriae* was even applied in the dating formulas in private documents in Egypt, as is indicated by quite a few papyrus texts. This had never been done on this scale before.⁹⁹ At first sight the significance of the Geta affair might be over-estimated in our literary sources because it fits perfectly into the picture of Caracalla as a cruel tyrant that Cassius Dio, Herodian, and the author of the *Historia Augusta* like to sketch, but Geta's very radical *damnatio memoriae*, even in papyrus texts, proves otherwise. Furthermore, the affair shows how important emperorship and the emperor had become. They were the determining factor at several levels of administration.

Caracalla also gave all free inhabitants of the empire – except so-called *dediticii* – Roman citizenship. This measure is commonly called the *constitutio Antoniniana*, after Caracalla's official name Antoninus.¹⁰⁰ According to Kostas Buraselis, this was the logical outcome of leveling processes in the empire under Septimius Severus and his late second century predecessors. Italy was losing its natural pre-eminence, and empire-wide religious ideas were rising. Maria-Teresa Schettino thinks that the *constitutio Antoniniana* was an expression of universalistic ideals, of a universal monarchy.¹⁰¹ These explanations are too simple and too general. Caracalla certainly had fiscal motives, as Cassius Dio says (77.9.5). All free inhabitants of the empire would now have to pay all taxes, those included that had only been paid by Roman citizens so far. That this emperor indeed had fiscal motives is also indicated by the rise of taxes on succession and manumission that he inaugurated. But the emperor also wished all inhabitants of the empire to stand behind him as Roman citizens in a kind of thanksgiving to the gods, as one big united family. This seems to be what P. Giss. 40 col. I, the main evidence of this surprising measure, is implying.¹⁰² It tallies with Caracalla's imperial representation on coins, which from 212 onwards has a distinctly religious character. Fritz Taeger speaks of the emperor's 'hektische Frommigkeit'.¹⁰³ On the reverses of the coins that he issued he venerated many protecting gods, among others Apollo, Aesculapius, Serapis, Venus, Sol, Jupiter, and Mars.¹⁰⁴ If Caracalla's text in P. Giss. 40, col. I is taken seriously, this emperor may be seen as a forerunner of Decius, who in 249 organized

a general and obligatory *supplicatio* to the gods. All citizens had to join in. The Christians refused, which caused a general persecution that took many lives. Under Caracalla the supplication was not yet enforced in this way.

The *constitutio Antoniniana* had important consequences. Roman law now ruled everywhere and in all provinces citizens could be called up to serve in citizen military units. In *Dig.* 50.1.33 Modestinus, living one generation later, could say that Rome is the common *patria* of us all. The penetration of Roman law in the provinces, which had been underway since the early Principate, will now have got more momentum; the common element of all the empire's inhabitants increasingly will have been Roman law, which became a kind of *ius commune*, next to local custom and law.¹⁰⁵

After the Geta affair Caracalla needed military fame, to reinforce his position. In 213 he briefly campaigned from Raetia against the Alamanni, who now entered Roman history, and against some other tribes.¹⁰⁶ As yet the Alamanni were not a 'nation,' nor a culturally and politically coherent tribe, but a conglomerate of Elbgermanic bands of warriors who with their families had started to move to the southwest, to the borders of the Roman Agri Decumates and the province of Raetia. Not all bands of warriors were consistently called Alamanni, however, some took other names, such as Iuthungi.¹⁰⁷ According to Herwig Wolfram, their advance resembled in a certain respect the much later Slavic settlement between the Baltic and the Mediterranean. In both instances the new arrivals moved in numerous groups without a monarchical leadership, they clung tenaciously to their common name and in some cases took their special names from the occupied lands.¹⁰⁸ Caracalla's war may have been a more serious affair than our main literary sources suggest. In this period Caracalla started to organize better his logistical base in northern Italy, the hinterland of Raetia; from his times onwards one *corrector* had to supervise Transpadane Italy, and another one the remainder of the peninsula, one of the first *correctores* being a trusted ally, Suetrius Sabinus.¹⁰⁹ After a long career, and having been *consul ordinarius* in 214, in about 214–215 this man was appointed *iudex ex delegatu principis cognitionum sacrarum caesarianarum*, that is, he became a kind of deputy emperor in legal matters.¹¹⁰ According to Cassius Dio Caracalla was deceitful towards the Alamanni (77.13f.), but to no avail. In the end he had to buy them off (77.14.3–4).¹¹¹ Nonetheless Caracalla started to style himself as *imperator III* and *Germanicus Maximus*, and on some of his coins he advertised his *Victoria Germanica*.¹¹² In 4.7.3 Herodian tells us that Caracalla won the loyalty and friendship of the Germans north of the border, drew auxiliary forces and a bodyguard from them, and every now and then appeared wearing German clothes, but this may be a malicious caricature.

In 214 Caracalla started a long and slow journey to the east. He went through Pannonia and Thrace, where his emulation of Alexander the Great started to become visible. One sign was that he recruited some Macedonians and had them exercise as if they were to fight in a phalanx formation that harked back to the times of Alexander the Great and his father. Caracalla also incorporated some Spartans into his army, as if he were to fight the Achaemenid king.¹¹³

After arriving to Asia Minor, at Troy, where sacrifices were offered to Achilles, the emperor with his army went into winter quarters at Nicomedia (214–215), where he – according to our main literary sources – behaved like a tyrant, but not without wit, *paideia* or piety.¹¹⁴ Then he moved through Asia Minor to Antioch, although some troops went by sea, for example the legion II Parthica, which through Antioch went to Apamea, which became a kind of second home to this unit. This legion turned up there time and time again in the third century, when wars necessitated the bringing in of reinforcements.¹¹⁵ Subsequently Caracalla went to Alexandria in Egypt, where he stayed in 215–216,¹¹⁶ and massacred many thousands of people, reputedly because they had been deriding and mocking him. This extreme violence may have been a reaction to a serious uprising, though, and not just an outburst of tyrannical temper.¹¹⁷ According to Gabriele Marasco, this uprising resulted from Caracalla's policy of supporting the lower classes, and was organized by people who were better off; but that is highly improbable and there is not a shred of evidence to prove it.¹¹⁸ In the spring of 216 Caracalla returned to Syria and abolished the client kingdom of the Abgarids (Osroene).¹¹⁹ He also tried to lure the Parthian king Artabanus V into another war against Rome over Armenia. It cost the emperor some effort because the Parthians were not eager to go to war and delivered up two anti-Roman Armenians (Cassius Dio 77.21.1). Caracalla nevertheless sent an army to Armenia but to no avail, according to Cassius Dio, because the commanding general, Theocritus, one of Caracalla's favorites, was completely incompetent. In 77.21.2 Dio tells us that Theocritus had been an imperial freedman who had taught Caracalla to dance. His was not the only erratic appointment. A ranking soldier, Oclatinus Adventus, became praetorian prefect.¹²⁰

But even after his aggressive policy towards Armenia Caracalla had to behave in an offensive way towards the Parthians and particularly their royal family to get what he wanted, a Parthian war.¹²¹ In the opening phase of the Parthian war, in April 217, Caracalla was murdered by a centurion, Martialis, who was indignant because Caracalla had had his brother killed. He probably acted, however, at the instigation of the praetorian prefect Macrinus, or the *praefectus legionis II Parthicae* Triccianus, who both may have felt threatened by the emperor.¹²² Another conspirator may have been Marcus Claudius Agrippa, a freedman who had risen to the status of an *eques* and even a senator; he had been Caracalla's *a cognitionibus* and *ab epistulis*. Macrinus later on gave him consular *ornamenta* and a special command in the *tres Daciae* and Moesia Inferior.¹²³ Caracalla's mother, Iulia Domna, ended her life after her son had been killed. She had been influential, but we should not overestimate her authority and interpret it as a kind of co-rulership. She had been very much interested in Greek *paideia*, and had been acquainted with philosophers and other intellectuals.¹²⁴

Macrinus was proclaimed emperor by the forces of the east, recognized by the senate, and not opposed by the other armies. First of all he had to fight the war against the Parthians that his predecessor had begun, but he was defeated and had to give up the war,¹²⁵ to the indignation of Cassius Dio who thinks of him as an unworthy emperor, who, because of distrust in his own military capacities and the

discipline and fighting qualities of his soldiers, ended the war by giving enormous sums of money both to king Artabanus and powerful men in his entourage (78.27.1).¹²⁶ According to Duncan-Jones, he spent about 200 million sesterces on this huge bribe.¹²⁷

Being the first equestrian emperor, Macrinus could not easily become popular among the senators, and being a bureaucrat or a logistical specialist more than a military man, he could not quickly win the hearts and minds of the soldiery.¹²⁸ His most important assistant was his praetorian prefect Ulpianus, a former *princeps peregrinorum* and *a censibus*.¹²⁹ He recalled two favorites of Caracalla, Sabinus, and Castinus, from their governorships in the militarily important regions Pannonia and Dacia, sending two upstarts, his fellow conspirators Tricrianus and Agrippa, to replace them. Castinus had been a senator making a militarily tinged career, so he could have become a risk to Macrinus.¹³⁰ Dio was not completely wrong censuring Macrinus because he too readily appointed upstarts and too easily gave away consular rank.¹³¹

Macrinus' program was fairly ambitious: according to Cassius Dio, he wanted to safeguard the lives and properties of senators, reduce the pay of the praetorians and the taxes on succession and manumission to pre-Caracalla levels, curb the weight of imperial gold and silver *statuae*, get back presents given by his predecessor to unworthy receivers, and sell superfluous trappings and implements from the imperial household (78.12.1–7). Besides he restored the weight of the *aureus* to its pre-215 standard of 7.2 g, and gave up issuing Caracalla's *antoniniani*, returning to old-fashioned *denarii* with higher fineness, through which he needed more silver plate.¹³² As a matter of fact Caracalla's *antoniniani* did not return until the days of Gordian III. In his first year Elagabalus issued *antoniniani* again, but the minting of this coinage stopped already in 219, probably because it was over-valued.¹³³

A consequence of Macrinus' policy was that he had to be thrifty towards the soldiers, the main receivers of imperial silver coinage. Dio ascribes to Macrinus a letter in which he complains about the greed of the soldiers: it was not in his power to neglect their demands, but he did not have the means to give them what they wanted (78.36.3). Greed was not, however, the only incentive to military rebellion. In 78.28.1–2 and 78.29.2 Dio vividly describes how frustrated the eastern army had become over their unnecessary defeat against the Parthians and the impending loss of privileges and prizes Caracalla had given them. Macrinus' program and political position remind us of those of Galba and Pertinax, and like them he was soon overthrown. The soldiers of the eastern armies found out that at Emesa there seemed to be some surviving Severan offspring. Iulia Maesa, a sister of Iulia Domna, lived there and had two daughters, Soaemias and Mamaea, who each had one son. Maesa's husband had been Gaius Iulius Avitus Alexianus, a senator who had pursued an impressive career.¹³⁴ He had been one of Septimius Severus' *comites* during the campaign in Britain (AD 208–211).¹³⁵ Maesa herself had lived at court with her sister Iulia Domna, or at home in Syria. By 218 she was a widow. Soaemias had had a husband, Sextus Varius Marcellus, who had made a successful equestrian career until he became a senator before 204. He

must have died before 218.¹³⁶ Their son who was called Varius Avitus Bassianus, and was rumored to be a son of the late Caracalla, must have been born by 204 AD.¹³⁷ Mamaea had been married to two husbands, the first of whom may have been the father of the later emperor Severus Alexander who was born in AD 208. In his early years he was called Alexianus Bassianus.¹³⁸ In the rumors that now circulated in Syria, he also ranked as Caracalla's offspring. Both boys, Varius Avitus and Alexianus, were dedicated to the service of the Emesene god Elagabal, the elder one serving as the deity's high priest.¹³⁹ In this role he attracted the attention of soldiers of the *legio III Gallica*, which was stationed not far from Emesa. The soldiers liked Varius' good looks, when he was dancing in public in the service of his god, and his reputed Severan family connection, and, being annoyed by what they saw as Macrinus' indolence, military incompetence, and niggardly behavior, proclaimed him emperor, supported by large other parts of the eastern army. In all likelihood Iulia Maesa and her purse had something to do with it. In 78.32.4 Cassius Dio shows that some centurions and high-ranking soldiers tried to keep the soldiers loyal to Macrinus, but to no avail. Neither could Macrinus' praetorian prefect Iulianus turn the tide (Herodian 5.4.3–4). The result was that ever more troops defected to the 'Severan' side, and that Macrinus lost the battle at Immae, near Emesa. He fled, was caught near Chalcedon, and killed somewhere in Cappadocia by a centurion. His son and *caesar* Diadumenianus was executed by another centurion, near Zeugma on the Euphrates.¹⁴⁰

His successor Elagabalus (AD 218–222) was at 14 years of age the youngest sole-ruling emperor the empire had ever seen and had no political or military experience.¹⁴¹ Elagabalus owed his position completely to carefully constructed dynastic claims and military discontent at Macrinus' rule. Right from his voyage to Rome and his *adventus* into this city his reign was exceptional and controversial. He overtly showed that he before all other things wished to serve and venerate his Syrian god Elagabal, as a high priest on the throne. On some of his coins he had himself called *Sacerdos Dei Solis Elagabali*.¹⁴² He left the administering of the empire to helpers, and maybe to his grandmother Iulia Maesa and his mother Soaemias.¹⁴³ In all of our literary sources the emperor Elagabalus is depicted as a debauched and extravagant tyrant who was involved in all kinds of vices, and made ridiculous appointments. How erratic the appointment policy of this emperor could be is demonstrated by a career analyzed by Benet Salway, the career of a certain [... atus], which in an odd way mixes senatorial and equestrian offices.¹⁴⁴ In the literary sources there are more scandalous appointees but they cannot be traced in inscriptions or papyri, the one possible exception being Aurelius Zoticus, who, according to Cassius Dio, was the son of a cook and became Elagabalus' lover and *cubicularius* because of his huge member, which is certainly gossip. However, an inscription from the reign of Severus Alexander mentions one Zoticus as *nomenclator a censibus*.¹⁴⁵ After four years – in March 222 – Elagabalus was removed from office and killed through a coup by important men at court and some military who preferred to have a 'normal' ruler, Severus Alexander, Mamaea's son, on the throne.¹⁴⁶ According to Herodian, Mamaea was involved. In 5.8.3 he says: 'Mamaea also privately handed over some

money for a clandestine distribution to the soldiers. In this way she hoped to capture the loyalty of the soldiers with money as well, always the most attractive inducement for the men.' A bonus was that this palace revolution did not result in civil war. From 218 to 222 there were no external wars to speak of either.

From 222 to 235 the empire was governed by the last 'Severan' emperor, Severus Alexander, another youngster on the throne, and another purported bastard son of Caracalla.¹⁴⁷ When he became emperor he was 14 years old. Judging from the available literary sources and Alexander's imperial representation his grandmother Maesa (until her death in 224) and mother Mamaea seem to have played an important role.¹⁴⁸ In 6.1.5–6 Herodian tells us that Mamaea tried to keep the young emperor aloof from evil things, and induced him to focus on judicial work, which the author characterizes as extremely important business, essential to imperial rule. This does not mean, however, that the two women had a decisive influence on actual politics.¹⁴⁹ To be influenced by women at court is a typical characteristic of weak, unsuccessful emperors, a *locus communis* that is used by Herodian, who certainly saw Alexander as an honest, but rather weak ruler. In his first year the most important man at court was the great jurist Ulpian, who had been *praefectus annonae* at the start of Alexander's reign, but soon became praetorian prefect. The two sitting prefects Flavianus and Chrestus seem to have been eliminated, which may have upset the praetorians, who also must have frowned at a jurist or bureaucrat being their sole prefect. Consequently, Ulpian was murdered by a group of soldiers already in the spring or summer of 223.¹⁵⁰ Nonetheless Alexander's reign – until 231 – in later periods counted as a time of peace and prosperity, and his rule as moderate. His reign had a fairly conservative character, also in imperial representation on coins, which emphasized traditional virtues and deities.¹⁵¹ Severus Alexander and his advisors tried to economize and spare local finances. If P. Fay. 20 should be attributed to Alexander's reign, which is convincingly argued by Oliver, complaining town councils were informed that the emperor understood their financial plight and accepted that they were at their limits, but did not have the means to remit any burdens or arrears, among others the obnoxious *aurum coronarium*, a tax which by now had to be paid regularly, and extra at accessions and victories.¹⁵² Under Elagabalus large sums of this extraordinary tax, which had to be paid to the emperor after a victory, had come in,¹⁵³ possibly the sums that Caracalla had ordained, making up victories he never had gained.¹⁵⁴ Consequently the communities in the empire did not have the means to pay this tax again. At least Alexander canceled the *aurum coronarium* due to him at the occasion of his succession.

In Herodian's view in 222 a period of *aristokratia*, government by the best (6.1.1f.), was ushered in. Alexander's coin legends suggest that a time of renovation and repair was ushered in.¹⁵⁵ The real historical background is that the Severan senate, *i.e.* the senate as it had come to be composed under Septimius Severus and Caracalla, now had the opportunity to consolidate its position: many families that came to the fore in the senate under those two emperors kept being there until well into the second half of the third century.¹⁵⁶ Like Iulia Domna during the reigns of the first two Severan emperors, Mamaea was interested in Greek *paideia*.

She even invited the Christian scholar Origenes, who had already become famous, even among non-Christians, to come to Antioch, where she stayed at that time.¹⁵⁷

There is some room for doubt about the peaceful and stable character of Alexander's reign, though. Cassius Dio tells us that there were many uprisings by many persons, which were all checked (80.3.1f.), and accuses the soldiery of ill-discipline and unruly, wanton, and arrogant behavior, giving as an example that detachments in Mesopotamia even killed their commander, Flavius Heracleo. Dio also tells us that some praetorians complained about him to their prefect, because he had ruled the soldiers in Pannonia with a strong hand when he had been provincial governor there. They demanded Dio's surrender, through fear that someone might compel them to submit to a régime similar to that of the Pannonian troops. Alexander did not give in, but honored Dio in various ways, especially by appointing him *consul ordinarius iterum* (AD 229), and paying the concomitant expenditures. However, having become afraid of negative reactions among the praetorians, the emperor asked Dio to spend the period of this consulship somewhere in Italy outside Rome (Cassius Dio 80.4.2–5.1).¹⁵⁸ This story, which may be reliable, coming as it is from an insider such as Cassius Dio, sharply illustrates Alexander's lack of authority among the military. Maybe he did not have much authority among his provincial governors either. On the basis of *Dig.* 49.1.25 we may argue that the emperor had to forbid procurators and provincial governors to obstruct provincials approaching him.¹⁵⁹ But this may have been a standard ruling that had to be repeated regularly, through many reigns.

Unrest among the military in this peaceful period is not improbable. Alexander, and above all his mother Mamaea, had a reputation of being thrifty or even mean, and were indeed trying to spare money and maintain the value and fineness of Roman gold and silver coins; but they were doing so after a period of excessive *donativa* and two structural raises in pay under Septimius Severus and Caracalla, which must have enhanced expectations.¹⁶⁰ Herodian was aware of the problem. In 6.8.4 he writes that the soldiers found the current state of the empire annoying because of the length of Alexander's rule, and unprofitable now that all his munificence had dried up.¹⁶¹ Macrinus had also understood what the problem was and had written about it to the senate, if we may believe Cassius Dio (78.36.3). Septimius Severus and Caracalla had financed increases in military expenditure by windfalls (booty) and confiscations but Alexander was a friend of the senate and did – at least until 231 – not wage wars; he had no military *res gestae* to be proud of, was fairly traditional in his ideology and representation, and did not pose as a friend of the soldiers, as Caracalla had done.¹⁶² His personal network of friends and supporters counted rather unmilitary senators and bureaucrats, men such as Ulpian and Dio.¹⁶³ Dio hated the soldiery and, as a governor of one of the Pannonias, vainly tried to apply old-fashioned severity to them.¹⁶⁴ In this way Alexander and his advisors were risking to destabilize their position of power, for frustrated ambitions and expectations among the soldiers and the military cadre were inflammable material.

In conclusion. These years of recovery after preceding waves of war and plague, which were simultaneously years of rising problems at the center of power, were –

as Fergus Millar says – a period of enormous, and perhaps still underestimated, importance in the history of Rome. In spite of all the problems, this was, with Severus' conquest of North Mesopotamia, the moment of the greatest-ever extent of the Roman empire. Secondly, under Caracalla, there came what moderns have labeled the *constitutio Antoniniana*, through which Roman citizenship was given to all free inhabitants of the empire except a few categories. Thirdly, this was the great age of the composition of the classic works of Roman law.¹⁶⁵ Brief wars at the northern and eastern frontiers not yet endangered the empire.

2.3. Escalation: the years 231–249

In 231 another period in third-century Roman war history was ushered in. The preceding period, AD 193–230, shows intensive warfare in the opening years (193–199), also within Roman borders, followed by years of recovery, during which the empire had to cope with intermittent warfare in the north, and a few short, but severe, external and internal conflicts in the east.

In 224 the Parthian Arsacids, who had been weakened by rivalry between Vologaeses and Artabanus V, the ruling king, were decisively defeated by the Persians under Ardashir I, the first in the line of the Sassanian dynasty.¹⁶⁶ The Romans were soon to discover that their armies were stronger and better organized than Parthian ones had been.¹⁶⁷ The new king put his realm in order, and subsequently started to remove remnants of Arsacid power, for example in Armenia,¹⁶⁸ and Roman outposts that were threateningly near to southern Mesopotamia, his main agrarian and trading area, which was of course also his most important tax territory. Among these outposts were the great caravan city of Palmyra, with its string of forts along the Euphrates; Dura-Europos, a stronghold founded about 303 BC by the Seleucids on the intersection of an east–west trade route and the trade route along the Euphrates, and Hatra, which had eventually gone over to the Roman side after the demise of the Arsacids, and after Ardashir had vainly attacked the city in 228 or 229 (Cassius Dio 80.3.2). The Persians were also interested in trading centers such as Nisibis.¹⁶⁹ Some ancient Greek and Roman authors thought that Ardashir was aiming at the restoration of the old Achaemenid Persian empire, up to the Aegean Sea, but there is not a shred of Persian evidence to confirm their opinion.¹⁷⁰ The only indication one could think of is the composition of the reliefs at Naqsh-e Rostam, where Sassanian representations were carved into the rock beneath much older Achaemenid royal tombs and sculptures.¹⁷¹

Relative stability and equilibrium at the eastern border of the Roman empire ended in 231. Herodian pays a lot of attention to the beginning of the first great Persian War in that year, as if he felt that he had witnessed a turning-point in history. In 6.2.1 he tells us:

in his [Alexander's] tenth year unexpected letters came from the governors of Syria and Mesopotamia with information that Artaxerxes [Ardashir], king of the Persians, had defeated the Parthians, broken up their eastern kingdom and killed Artabanus, the previous great king who wore the double crown. He had

also gained complete control over the neighboring barbarians and reduced them to tributary status. He was causing unrest by refusing to be contained by the river Tigris and was crossing the banks which were the boundary of the Roman empire. Mesopotamia was overrun and Syria threatened.

Having tried to negotiate, though in vain, Alexander and his advisors assembled a large army and departed to the east. Of course, there were logistical consequences. As Fergus Millar observes, the effects of the imperial presence were felt widely, as always. Supplies for the army were requisitioned from as far away as Pamphylia, presumably being brought by sea to Seleucia near Antioch.¹⁷² One of Alexander's trusted assistants was an educated man, well-versed in Greek and Latin literature and Roman law, Gaius Furius Sabinius Aquila Timesitheus who had followed a procuratorial career and was now *procurator provinciae Syriae Palaestinae ibi exactor reliquorum annonae sacrae expeditionis*, an important logistical function.¹⁷³ Another helper was Rutilius Pudens Crispinus, who brought detachments to Palmyra, probably to forage.¹⁷⁴ The plan was to attack Ardashir with three armies, one in the north, through the mountains into Media Atropatene, another one in the south, along the river Euphrates and through the allied Palmyrene strongholds that could provide food and shelter, and the main force with the emperor in the middle, in North Mesopotamia. The northern forces were successful, but not decisively so. The central army was too slow and thus gave the Persians the opportunity to concentrate first on the southern Roman wing, which was annihilated, and then fight the Roman main force. A battle between this force and the Persians resulted in a costly draw, and subsequently the emperor and many of his men fell ill and retreated to Antioch to recover. The northern army was summoned back to Syria and sustained heavy losses in the mountainous area it had to cross. Remarkably enough Ardashir did not follow up his successes, probably because he had lost a good deal of his forces as well, in Media as well as North Mesopotamia. If we believe Herodian, he retreated, accepted a kind of armistice, which was to last three or four years, and disbanded his army (Herodian 6.6.4–6).¹⁷⁵ It seems that Alexander's soldiers were not happy about this outcome. In 6.6.4 Herodian tells us that Alexander attempted to restore the morale of the soldiers and pacify their annoyance by a generous distribution of money, believing this to be the only remedy which would restore his popularity with them. There are traces of this campaign in local coinage. According to Ziegler, not many coins had been minted in eastern Cilicia from 222–229, but the more so in 231.¹⁷⁶

When the eastern campaign was near its end, bad news came in from the west. The most elaborate version of what happened subsequently is Herodian's, who depicts Alexander as a hesitating commander who was too much dependent on his mother's opinions.¹⁷⁷ In 6.7 Herodian tells us that the message from the governors in Illyria was that the Germans were on the march across the Rhine and Danube, devastating the Roman Empire, over-running the garrisons on the river banks, and also the cities and villages, and that the emperor's presence was needed at the new front. Epigraphical evidence indicates that already before 231

fighting was going on at the Rhine, near Cologne. In AD 231 a monument was dedicated to Jupiter, Mars Propugnator, Victoria, and the *salus* of Severus Alexander, Mamaea, and the army at Beuel, on the right bank of the Rhine, in the region of *legio I Minervia*.¹⁷⁸ According to Herodian, the news from the west dismayed Alexander and caused distress to the soldiers transferred from Illyricum who were about to lose what they had been allowed to possess since Septimius Severus' military reforms. The soldiers turned their anger on Alexander, blaming him for his betrayal of their cause in the east through his negligence or cowardice and his hesitant procrastination over the northern crisis. Reluctantly and sadly, giving in to sheer necessity, Alexander issued the proclamation of an expedition. A force was left behind in the east, which was sufficiently large to defend the Roman border; the camps and outposts were given more efficient defenses and their full complement of soldiers, which means that Alexander either could not take a very large army to the northwest, or that new recruits had been attracted. In 6.7.8 Herodian tells us that Alexander took with him many Moors and a huge force of archers from the east; the latter came from Osrhoene, though some were Parthian deserters and mercenaries.¹⁷⁹ The Moors were no doubt mounted troops. An experienced equestrian officer, Maximinus Thrax,¹⁸⁰ was appointed prefect of the recruits (*praefectus tironibus*, Herodian 6.8.2), which suggests that Alexander and his advisors had been recruiting heavily to replenish the ranks of the northern armies, which must have lost many soldiers through Alexander's setbacks in the east. That a post as a prefect of the recruits was considered of enough consequence to justify explicit mentioning is not completely strange. Something similar is to be seen in the career of Cn. Marcius Rustius Rufinus from Beneventum (period of Septimius Severus), who just before becoming *primus pilus his* was a *dilectator regionis Transpadanae*, a recruiting officer in north Italy.¹⁸¹ One of the trusted officers of the eastern campaign, Timesitheus, participated again in Alexander's staff on the Rhine, now as a deputy governor (*agens vice praesidis*) of Germania Inferior, and simultaneously as a deputy procurator of the imperial domains in Belgica and the two Germaniae, a logistically effective combination of functions.¹⁸² This combination of functions shows how important imperial domains had become in supplying the army. Mogontiacum (= Mainz) became Alexander's headquarters, which indicates that he was about to attack the Alamanni first. A bridge was laid out over the Rhine, and the campaign was about to take off; but Alexander and his mother again preferred diplomacy over fighting, probably for financial reasons, and again in vain. Their soldiers were upset about it; they wished to fight and punish the tribesmen who had plundered their possessions. Many of them deserted Alexander and started to opt for a new emperor, Maximinus Thrax, who usurped the imperial power and had Alexander and his mother killed, in February or March 235.¹⁸³ He became the second *eques* on the throne after Macrinus. Eutropius, who is extremely brief about this ruler, comments:

Post hunc Maximinus ex corpore militari primus ad imperium accessit sola militum voluntate, cum nulla senatus intercessisset auctoritas neque ipse

senator esset (9.1). [Maximinus was the first to come to power only through the wishes of the military, without support from the senate and without being a senator himself.]

This coup was not followed by civil war, although some detachments in the army that Alexander had brought from the east to Mogontiacum, particularly the Osrohenian archers, took to rebellion, and two *consulares*, Gaius Petronius Magnus and Titius Quartinus, tried to kill the new emperor.¹⁸⁴ The military sedition was put down and Maximinus prevented other military unrest by allowing the soldiers and their officers double pay, at least in his first year.¹⁸⁵ This meant that a *primus pilus* now started to earn at a procuratorial level,¹⁸⁶ which, added to the important tasks they kept fulfilling, must have enhanced their status. Maximinus' military orientation also became visible in his coinage. In his representation on coins Maximinus strongly focused on the military.¹⁸⁷

The senate accepted Maximinus, and cooperated in appointing his son Maximus *caesar*. Not much is known of the new emperor's preceding career; he may have had a successful military career that was eventually followed by equestrian posts.¹⁸⁸ In 7.1 and 3 and in general in books seven and eight Herodian depicts him as a typical barbarian on the throne, which is certainly exaggerated.¹⁸⁹ Maximinus did not go to Rome. In the first three years of his reign, 235, 236, and 237, he fought the Germans within their own territory, in 235 from Mogontiacum, Germania Superior, and in the other years from Sirmium, which now started to be one of the main Roman headquarters.¹⁹⁰ In 235, during his campaign against the Germans, Maximinus went far north. Archeological findings demonstrate that in the first half of the third century a battle between Romans and Germans was fought in northern Germany near Kalefeld-Oldenrode, south of Hanover. This battle must have been fought under or by Maximinus Thrax.¹⁹¹ The emperor may have been successful but at heavy costs, which came on top of the rise in pay that he had allowed the soldiers in his first year. Herodian (7.3) tells us that harsh tax-raising in the days of Maximinus Thrax caused an unprecedented uproar and ultimately led to the rebellions of 238. Maximinus confiscated possessions of rich people, and grabbed all kinds of reserves, even from temples. In 7.3.5–6 Herodian tells us:

After Maximinus had reduced most of the distinguished families to penury, he then began to think it was an unimportant, insignificant activity and not enough to satisfy his desire. So he turned to expropriate any money in the city being collected for food supply and cash distribution to the common people, and funds put aside for theatres and festivals. Temple dedications, statues of the gods, honorary presentations to the heroes (or: 'deified emperors?'), any ornamentation on public buildings or city decorations, or material that could be turned into coin was all melted down.

Local treasures and holy places were defended by local people and soldiers were accused by their own kinsfolk because of their greed, which had caused

Maximinus' rapacity (7.3.6). This may be a rhetorical exaggeration in a biased, anti-Maximinus story, but the passage might contain some truth. Large expeditions to Germany required a heavy supply structure, because armies could not find much food and other goods there.¹⁹²

Maximinus' need of money may have been increased by widespread road repair. As Karen Haegemans makes clear, an aspect of military preparations taken seriously by Maximinus was the construction, renovation, and maintenance of the road system. There was hardly a road in the empire that was not lined with his milestones at one point or another. By far the largest part of his inscriptions belong to this category, a feature Maximinus has in common with other short-lived emperors, such as Philip the Arab, Decius, and Carus. As could be expected, Maximinus' milestones are well represented in the western parts of the empire, particularly in the Rhine and Danube areas, but there are also quite a few of them in Spain, Italy, and particularly in the African provinces. Apparently he not only wanted to repair roads but also to represent himself and his dynasty there more strongly in this way, especially in Africa, a Severan stronghold. Relatively fewer of Maximinus' *miliaria* were erected in the east.¹⁹³ In the east dark clouds may have been gathering again. The Persians seem to have taken Nisibis and Carrhae during Maximinus' reign.¹⁹⁴ That Maximinus nonetheless was not planning a Persian war is indicated by a lack of Syrian small change. According to Butcher, very few coins were produced in Syria for this emperor.¹⁹⁵ Normally the production of local coins, mainly in bronze denominations, went up when an army was passing by or was about to launch a campaign in nearby territories.¹⁹⁶ Soldiers who had received their pay in silver money or even in gold, would need to change it for small bronze change on local markets.

Under Maximinus there was already some awareness of the dangers the empire was to face. In AD 238, at what is now called Gressenich, near Aachen, an altar was dedicated to Jupiter and the genius of the place for the safety of the empire, remarkably enough not for the emperor.¹⁹⁷ For the entire empire! As a matter of fact it is quite understandable that people were feeling anxious in 238. So far wars in the east and north had not coincided in time, nor had they coincided with momentous civil wars, but from the last year of Maximinus this started to change. The emperor was still at Sirmium, waging war against Germanic and other groups, when trouble in the east recurred, and a minor conflict in Africa Proconsularis exploded into usurpation and civil war. Fiscal pressures in North Africa, particularly hitting *conductores* of imperial domains and other local notables, led in 238 to a spontaneous rebellion at Thysdrus (El-Djem), in Africa Proconsularis, among rich young men, many of them from Carthage, whose families had many *coloni* working on their estates. A *rationalis*, probably a *procurator provinciae Africae tractus Karthaginensis*, who had a long history of savage sentences and confiscations behind himself, had driven the *iuvenes* and their families up the wall through an attempt to extort quick money from them. Herodian tells us that he had fined young men from Carthage in the courts, and had stripped them of their ancestral family property (7.4.3).¹⁹⁸ The procurator was murdered. Coming on top of 'normal' heavy financial pressures, his extortionous practices

had become unbearable. This may be characteristic for heavy-taxed North Africa. According to Alexander Polley, third-century usurpations and rebellions in this region, as distinct from those in other provinces, correlated more with state oppression than with external attack.¹⁹⁹

In a desperate leap forward the insurgents proclaimed the governor of their province, 80-yea-old Gordian and his son and namesake, emperors.²⁰⁰ The elder Gordian's cultural lineage was impeccable; it seems that he stemmed from the sophist and *consularis* Herodes Atticus, a Roman Greek serving the emperors like Cassius Dio and Gordian himself.²⁰¹ Gordian clearly was a 'Severan' senator. He had been consul about 220–222, and had served Caracalla as governor of Britannia Inferior, a province with a sizeable army.²⁰² Gordian and his son and namesake were both proclaimed *augusti*; they are known as Gordian I and II.²⁰³ According to Herodian (7.6.3f.), they sent envoys to leading citizens in Rome, promising to exercise great clemency, send all informers into exile, grant retrials to all who had been unjustly condemned and restore exiles to their countries. To the soldiers they promised a bigger donative than ever before and to the people they gave notice of a distribution of money. They also sent a few trusted men to Rome to kill Maximinus' praetorian prefect Vitalianus (7.6.4f.),²⁰⁴ which was not a very moderate measure. In North Africa they mobilized a make-shift army, which largely consisted of hardly trained Carthaginian youth. It was soon defeated by professional troops from Numidia under Capelianus, a commander who had remained loyal to Maximinus. Along with the Gordiani many of their partisans perished. Carthage was thoroughly plundered by Capelianus' troops, and other pro-Gordian towns suffered punishment too.²⁰⁵ In Rome, Italy, and other parts of the empire, however, the messages from Africa had an unexpected result. The senate took sides with the Gordians, declared Maximinus and his son public enemies, sent letters to provincial governors to invite them to join the senate, and started to recruit soldiers among the *iuventus* of Italy. Many governors followed suit, though not those of the Danube and Rhine provinces and Hispania Tarraconensis, where a certain Decius ruled, probably the later emperor.²⁰⁶ In Rome supporters of Maximinus were lynched and symbols of his reign destroyed. A council of 20 experienced statesmen, the *XXviri ex senatus consulto rei publicae curandae*, was created. Of the exact date of its formation, its constitutional position, and its functions we remain to a large extent in the dark.²⁰⁷ Two men from their midst were chosen by senatorial vote as new emperors: Marcus Clodius Pupienus Maximus, who had held many military commands, and Decimus Caelius Calvinus Balbinus, a patrician who had held two consulships, the second one only recently, in 234, under Severus Alexander; he consequently stood high on the senatorial status ladder. The two men governed from late April to early August 238.²⁰⁸ The populace in Rome disliked the two, and forced the senate to appoint as *caesar* a young son of Gordian II's daughter. Other members of the *vigintiviri* were Tullius Menophilus and Rutilius Pudens Crispinus, who in 238 became defenders of Aquileia against the emperor Maximinus. Crispinus may have been admitted into the senate under Septimius Severus, after which his career followed the usual stages. Before 238, he had been governor

of Achaea and *consul suffectus*. He had been one of Severus Alexander's helpers in the east.²⁰⁹ Of Menophilus' career almost nothing is known. Other members of the 20 were L. Caesonius Lucillus Macer Rufinianus, an Italian and patrician of consular rank, whose father had been one of Severus Alexander's *comites*; L. Valerius Claudius Acilius Priscilianus, a member of a very old, even republican, senatorial family who had been *consul ordinarius* in 233, under Alexander; and M. Cn. Licinius Rufinus from Thyatira in Asia Minor, a former equestrian jurist and bureaucrat who had been adlected into the senate, and made a senatorial career under Severus Alexander. A rather heterogeneous, but status-high and experienced group, with Severan backgrounds.²¹⁰

The tense atmosphere that had come to prevail in Rome resulted in a tragic clash between populace and praetorians. A handful of praetorian veterans of Maximinus' guard had entered the room in Rome where the senate was deliberating about the actual situation. Other soldiers had stayed outside. Two senators, according to Herodian called Gallicanus and Maecenas,²¹¹ loathed the sight of military personnel standing and listening within the room, and stabbed those veterans to death. The conflict quickly escalated and the urban *plebs*, taking sides against the praetorians, together with a band of gladiators, attacked the praetorians in their camp but were defeated. Then they cut off the water supply to the camp, but the soldiers attacked the *plebs*, killed many, and seriously damaged the city.²¹² In 7.12.1 Herodian tells us that, as a result of this incident, the fury of the senate and people increased. Commanders were chosen and recruits enrolled all over Italy. All the youth groups (Lat.: *iuventutes*) were called up and equipped with whatever makeshift weapons could be found. One of the two new emperors, Pupienus Maximus, took most of the force with him to fight against Maximinus. The rest stayed behind to guard and protect the city.²¹³ According to Herodian 8.6.6, a number of German auxiliaries volunteered to join Maximus' army.

All of this was very unusual. Apparently the insurgents in Africa really had put a match to the tinder, and Maximinus' harsh rule had obviously created an atmosphere of despair and indignation. Maximinus reacted swiftly. Without preparing a series of well-provided storehouses, which would have been the normal procedure in preparing a major military campaign such as this one, he took off as quickly as he could, to crush his opponents in Italy before they could become too strong.²¹⁴ A terrible mistake. In Hema, still outside Italy, Maximinus discovered what his opponents were planning to do: to bring all people, supplies and food into fortified towns, destroying what was left in the countryside. In this way they could starve his army, which was now dependent on foraging in the fields. One of the first great fortified cities within the borders of Italy was Aquileia, in the neighborhood of modern Trieste, which in normal times had an important entrepôt and market function between Italy and the adjacent Danube region (Herodian 8.2.3), and consequently must have had plenty of storage capacity. Ironically enough, Maximinus had been honored there as *Aquileiensium restitutor et conditor* after having restored a gate and an entrance road.²¹⁵ The senate's generals had stored in Aquileia lots of food and materiel, and had put there a strong garrison under two experienced commanders, Tullius Menophilus and Rutilius

Pudens Crispinus, who had served under Severus Alexander.²¹⁶ Maximinus tried to take Aquileia, but was pinned down to a long siege, for which he did not have enough food, because the surrounding territory had been emptied and laid waste (Herodian 8.4.5f.). Besides Pupienus Maximus was drawing near with his army. He waited for things to happen at Ravenna (Herodian 8.6.5). Maximinus accused and punished a great number of his own commanders for a cowardly lack of effort in their conduct of the siege, thus fostering hatred and anger among his soldiers and his military cadre.²¹⁷ In the end, by April 238, Maximinus and his son were killed by soldiers of the *legio II Parthica*. In 8.5.8 Herodian tells us that they had decided to kill Maximinus, so that they could abandon the long, interminable siege, and stop laying waste Italy for the benefit of a tyrant who was condemned and hated. Herodian calls them soldiers from the camp on Mount Alba (near Rome), thus introducing them as a kind of Italians who did not like plundering their homeland.²¹⁸

Pupienus Maximus and Balbinus, the two senatorial emperors, ruled only briefly and did not do much of any consequence. On coins they praised their *amor mutuus*, *fides mutua* and *pietas mutua* but most of the time they seem to have quarreled.²¹⁹ To repair their financial situation, they reintroduced the *antoninianus* as the main silver coinage, with a reduction in weight by one sixth and a fineness of 43–47 per cent of silver.²²⁰ They were popular with the senators, but neither the populace of Rome, nor the soldiers there supported them, and after about one month they were murdered by dissatisfied soldiers (May 238), their successor being Gordian III, their *caesar*, who had been forced upon them. Their violent death was fortunately not followed by another civil war.²²¹ At this point Herodian's work breaks off, and there is no longer any coherent contemporary chronological narrative until the beginning of the fourth century. The perspective on third-century history from 238 to about 272 is largely that of Publius Herennius Dexippus, through the works of Byzantine writers such as Zosimus and Zonaras, and large parts of the *Historia Augusta*. One of the consequences is a relative emphasis on wars and raids in the Balkans and Asia Minor, next to the wars in the east, which attracted attention of historiographers anyway.

Of the opening years of Gordian's rule not much is known. Severus Alexander was proclaimed a *divus* by senatorial decree, imperial representation reverted to Severan traditions, senators who had served Alexander or had become important in 238 maintained their positions of power and status, and the *legio III Augusta* was cashiered because it had destroyed Gordian I and II.²²² On the basis of rescripts by Gordian III to military men, Detlef Liebs concludes that this emperor was benign towards the soldiers.²²³ There was a lot of judicial and administrative activity in the first years of this reign, maybe under the influence of important senators and Herennius Modestinus, the last of the great jurists at court.²²⁴ Probably there was just a lot to do. Since 231 the emperors had dedicated themselves to wars, and may have neglected judicial work.

Gordian III and his advisors inherited two simultaneous wars: one in the Danube region, abandoned by Maximinus when he left Sirmium to go to Italy, and another one in the east, where violence had started again about 236 or

237. In 238 the Goths broke into Roman history. Tullius Menophilus, one of the defenders of Aquileia, was sent to the Balkans to stop the ravaging of Roman territory by free Dacians (Carpi) and Goths. He fought the Carpi and bought off the Goths. In 239 Viminacium in Upper Moesia, apparently one of Menophilus' headquarters, became a *colonia* and received a mint.²²⁵ In 241 Furius Timesitheus, who had served Severus Alexander in the east and on the Rhine, came to power. He became *praefectus praetorio* and started to dominate Gordian's court and policies.²²⁶ Still an *eques*, he even became the emperor's father-in-law.²²⁷ In 242 the necessity of another Persian War was becoming clearer by the day. In 239 the Persians had attacked Dura-Europos, though in vain.²²⁸ About the same time, but perhaps earlier, under Maximinus Thrax, the Romans may have lost Carrhae and Nisibis.²²⁹ Another Roman ally, Hatra, was successfully attacked by Ardashir in 240/241. Since 228 or 229, when the Persians had vainly attacked the stronghold, the city of Hatra had gone over to the Roman side; there are traces of Roman military presence at Hatra from the days of Severus Alexander.²³⁰ This time, in 240/241, the Persians made a tremendous effort to subdue Hatra. The most extended siege works known in the near east were recently detected at Hatra. Stefan Hauser and David Tucker, the excavators, date the structures to Ardashir's campaign of AD 240/241.²³¹

There is a theory that Gordian III went to the east already in 239, but there is no sound evidence to prove it.²³² In that year the Romans seem to have strengthened their eastern defenses by reviving the client kingdom of Osroene, under a scion of the old Abgarid family (AD 239–242). Maybe other emergency measures were taken as well.²³³ Roman commanders may in this time have added some heavy cavalry to their forces, to be more of a match to Persian cataphracts.²³⁴ It seems that under Gordian III there was a program of road repair, which is attested for the province of Moesia Inferior.²³⁵

The great campaign that was organized in 242 was staged as a revival of the old Persian wars of classical Greece, and as a great Roman event. The gates of the god Janus at Rome were opened, as in days of old, and new games were instituted for the goddess Athena Promachos, who in 490 BC had championed Athens at Marathon against the Persians.²³⁶ In Gordian's train was the Platonic philosopher Plotinus who must have joined the campaign presuming that it would – like the famous expedition of Alexander the Great – amount to a triumphal march to the heartlands of the Persian empire and even India.²³⁷ Having returned from the east, Plotinus settled in Rome, where he founded his own school. The Persian view on Gordian's campaign is brought forward in Shapur I's great inscription, the so-called *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*. The author of the inscription tells us that Gordian took a sizeable army with him, which had been raised in all of the Roman empire and included Goths and other Germans.²³⁸ The expedition was actually led by Timesitheus, the emperor's father-in-law and *praefectus praetorio*.²³⁹ As in 231–234, there must have been logistical consequences, not only in the actual war zones, but also in the hinterlands and along the great military transit routes through the Balkans and Asia Minor. Villagers complaining about military high-handedness and requisitioning under Gordian III and his successor

Philip the Arab were living along such routes, for example at Skaptopara in Thrace and Aragua in Phrygia.²⁴⁰ A part of Gordian's army may have been transferred to the east by sea, though.²⁴¹ In the opening phases of the war Gordian and Timesitheus were rather lucky. Underway in the Balkans they successfully fought some invading barbarians.²⁴² Having arrived in North Mesopotamia they defeated a Persian army at Rhessaena, took back Carrhae and Nisibis, and marched southeast along the river Euphrates towards Ctesiphon. Before arriving there, however, Timesitheus had died.²⁴³ Early in 243 Philip, later known as the emperor Philippus Arabs or Philip the Arab, a military man and presumably a logistical specialist, was appointed his successor. Not much of his preceding career is known. His brother Priscus was important too. He was prefect of Mesopotamia and *praefectus praetorio*. Together the brothers dominated the direct hinterland and the logistics of the campaign.²⁴⁴

Right at the point where the Roman army would have entered fertile southern Mesopotamia, at Misiche or, as Jewish sources call it, Pumbadita, Shapur was waiting. The Roman army was defeated there, and had to retreat to the northwest, to Zaitha on the Euphrates. It seems that Gordian had been wounded in battle, and died at Zaitha, where mutiny broke out in his army, because the soldiers no longer accepted Gordian's leadership or – more probably – because Philip and his helpers had caused a tumultuous atmosphere within the remnants of the Roman forces by holding back food and supplies.²⁴⁵ If Philip wanted to be emperor instead of Gordian, he was successful. He was recognized by the armed forces and the senate and governed from late February or early March 244 to September 249.²⁴⁶ Gordian was buried in a tomb near Zaitha, in the neighborhood of Circesium, which was still visible in 363, when Julian's army was passing by. It is mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus.²⁴⁷ Philip made his peace with the Persians, probably without permanently giving up any territory, and issued a series of coins carrying the legend *Pax Fundata cum Persis*.²⁴⁸ Philip had to recognize Persian primacy in Armenia, ransom many Roman soldiers and pay to Shapur an enormous sum, 500,000 *aurei*.²⁴⁹ Shapur, overjoyed, called Misiche Peroz-Shapur (Shapur is victorious).²⁵⁰ Philip must have faced serious financial problems, for his tribute to Shapur came on top of subsidies to the Goths, who received money since 238, and the unavoidable donatives to the armed forces, which according to Zosimus 1.19.1 were large.²⁵¹ Philip must have found some extra money, though, for until about 250 the weight and silver content of the *antoniniani* gradually fell, but by very little compared to what was going to happen from about AD 250 onwards.²⁵² He must have used treasures that Gordian III had taken with him to the east (HA *Gordiani* 26.3). Philip may also have requisitioned and borrowed much money, trying to repay the loans by squeezing more out of Egypt, where he soon introduced some reforms. Philip tried to improve land registration in Egypt, disposing of derelict land, and introduced *dekaprotoi* within town councils, rich people who could shoulder the heaviest burdens. According to Peter Parsons, Philip's reform amounted to a reshaping of Egyptian administration in agriculture, liturgies, taxation, and the *annona militaris*, aiming at an increase in all kinds of proceeds.²⁵³

There is an analogy with Valerian's policy in 260. In one of the extant fragments of his work, Petrus Patricius tells us that in that year Valerian, having lost many men by the plague, amassed an enormous amount of gold to buy off Shapur, because he now had too few troops left to beat his opponent.²⁵⁴

After Macrinus and Maximinus, Philip was the third equestrian emperor who had come to imperial power through a coup or usurpation in times of precarious warfare, which lent him a relatively low prestige, status, and legitimacy. This increased the chances of civil war and usurpation. But there was a difference. Macrinus and Maximinus had continued the wars they had inherited from their predecessors, whereas Philip immediately made a peace treaty with Shapur and consequently could focus on strengthening his position. He was accepted as emperor by the senate, marched through Asia Minor, Thrace, and the Danube region to Rome, had Gordian III deified, and had his son appointed *caesar*.²⁵⁵ To cover his back, in 244, the emperor Philip appointed his brother Iulius Priscus governor of Syria Coele and Mesopotamia. Priscus even received the title *rector Orientis*. In Syria Coele he acted as *agens vices legati*.²⁵⁶ Another relative of Philip, his brother-in-law Severianus, was appointed to a similar post in Moesia and Macedonia.²⁵⁷ In this way Philip stationed two trusted relatives at crucial military regions. In his imperial representation Philip accentuated the position of his wife Otacilia Severa and his son Philip, as Septimius Severus had done with his relatives.²⁵⁸ In 247–248 Philip was successful in a war against the Carpi who had been ransacking Dacia and maybe also Moesia. According to Zosimus, the invaders had been plundering around the Danube and were thoroughly beaten by Philip.²⁵⁹ In the spring of 248, after his victory, Philip went to Rome, to celebrate Rome's millennium there in a splendid fashion, with great pomp and in traditional style, which is evident from the extensive series of imperial coins in all metals and denominations, with images of Philip, his wife Otacilia, and his son Philip the Younger, bearing legends such as *Saeculares Augusti*, *Saeculum Novum*, *Romae Aeternae*, *Laetitia Fundata*, and *Liberalitas Augusti*.²⁶⁰ Like Septimius Severus before him, Philip enlarged and adorned his place of birth in the Roman province of Arabia, which from now onwards was called Philippopolis.²⁶¹

Philip has a bad reputation in Greek and Latin historiography. He is represented as having betrayed Gordian III, as a coward and a spendthrift, and as a man who made of the emperorship a sort of family tyranny. However, Philip was an active administrator, he fought in person against the Carpi in the Balkans, showed to be a skilful diplomat in his dealings with the Persians, and got on reasonably well with the senate in Rome. Besides, he tried to avoid too heavily debasing the coinage. He tried to revive Antonine and Severan times; in his not very spectacular, fairly traditional concept of emperorship Philip seems to have been returning to the period between 222 and 235.²⁶² Like Iulia Domna and Mamaea, Otacilia Severa was interested in Greek *paideia*. In *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.36.3 Eusebius tells us that she and her husband stood in contact with the Christian scholar Origenes, as Mamaea had done before.²⁶³ In Ps.-Aelius Aristides' *Eis basilea*, a mid-third century mirror-of-princes in the form of a *laudatio*, Philip is in a rather traditional second century AD way praised for his personal virtues, his accessibility, his love of Greek culture, his thrift, his careful

military planning and strategy, and his *severitas* towards the soldiers. In this *laudatio* Philip counts as a moderately behaving well-educated emperor who attained power by merit and without bloodshed, though unexpectedly while campaigning on the eastern frontier, an emperor who disciplined the soldiery by persuasion, not by limitless donations, abolished informers, and did not requisition too much from the empire's inhabitants. Instead he lowered taxes. The result is a renewed *felicitas temporis* in the empire.²⁶⁴ This is prose written by a contemporary Greek intellectual who was aware of what was going on but interpreted contemporary facts and developments in the light of traditional commonplaces, which he superimposed as a kind of matrix.²⁶⁵

In conclusion: unlike most of the preceding period, AD 199–230, these 17 or 18 years, AD 231–248, saw recurring warfare at the northern and eastern borders of the empire, in the Balkans in Moesia and Dacia, and in the east in Mesopotamia, Armenia, some client kingdoms, and Persian territory. Maximinus was the last emperor fighting the Germans in their own lands, as far north as the region of Hanover. As yet no territories were lost, but losses in Roman military manpower and equipment must have been heavy, in all armies but especially in the eastern ones. Compensation through recruitment of new soldiers was provided at the end of Severus Alexander's reign, as Maximinus Thrax' career demonstrates, and to all likelihood under Philip as well, but there is no sufficient evidence to prove it. The consequences of prolonged continuous warfare, such as recurring requisitions, plunder, devastations, deportations, migrations away from afflicted areas, diseases, and brigandage, may have started to hit some Balkan provinces. Under Philip the eastern provinces began to feel oppressed by Priscus' fiscal brutality but on average this part of the empire was still thriving.²⁶⁶ Paying and supplying campaigning armies undoubtedly increased fiscal pressures everywhere, not just in adjacent hinterlands, but also in regions as far away as North Africa, where this pressure caused a rebellion in AD 238. Long distance large-scale military movements, particularly in times of great wars in the east, already caused problems along important transit routes, as is demonstrated by extant petitions to the emperors Gordian III and Philip the Arab.

In spite of recurring wars and problems there was a lot of continuity with earlier periods. These 18 or so years were a period of onset of crisis, not yet of crisis. Under Gordian III and Philip Roman government tried to return to Severan governance, the nucleus of the senate as it had become under Septimius Severus remained more or less the same, the imperial coinage was debased but apparently was not yet distrusted, and the administrative and military structures, strategies, and appointment policies largely remained as they had been, although equestrian military men and bureaucrats were more frequently appointed to posts and tasks that officially belonged to senators.²⁶⁷ The reign of Maximinus was an interlude, but even he kept appointing senators into positions they were entitled to.²⁶⁸

2.4. Crisis: the years 249–268²⁶⁹

In 249 the emperor Philip had to face problems in the east and at the Danube frontier, the by now traditional war zones. In both areas, he was confronted

with usurpations. In the east, in Syria and Cappadocia, hinterlands of warfare at the eastern borders, people who protested against Priscus' harsh fiscal regime sided with Jotapianus, who in Körner's view was a descendant of the royal family of Commagene.²⁷⁰ In the Danube region the threat of new invasions provoked a rebellion under Tiberius Claudius Marinus Pacatianus, who was probably a senator whose family had come to the fore under Severus Alexander or somewhat earlier.²⁷¹ According to Ulrich Huttner, he may have eliminated Severianus.²⁷² It is not very clear what his position was. Pacatianus may have commanded troops in more than one province in the region. According to Fara Nasti, Philip may have put Pacatianus at the head of the Moesiae and Pannoniae, to better organize the defenses against threatening invasions.²⁷³ Both Jotapianus and Pacatianus seem to have started their usurpations at the end of 248, and came to their end in 249, Pacatianus about April 249, and Jotapianus somewhat later. Both Jotapianus and Pacatianus were killed by their own soldiers, who began to mistrust their chances.

Apparently, Philip had not succeeded in raising sufficient extra money, for example in Egypt,²⁷⁴ and so he and his brother had to put heavy fiscal pressures on other regions as well in order to find money for his subsidies to the Goths and the Persians, and finance his war in the Balkans. In this way Philip must have been lured into a policy similar to that of Maximinus, which eventually had cost the latter his throne and his life. Like Maximinus, Philip and his family did not have enough authority to raise many more funds than traditional taxation and requisition would yield without risking rebellion and usurpation.

To eliminate Pacatianus, punish rebellious people, and check invaders Philip sent Gaius Messius Quintus Decius Valerinus to the Danube region, probably with a special command in the Pannonias and Moesias. The threat of a Gothic invasion was real, because Philip or his governors seem to have interrupted paying the tribute that the Goths had been receiving since 238.²⁷⁵ Decius was born in a village near Sirmium, and was a senator who had been *praetor* about 220 and *consul suffectus* before 232. According to Anthony Birley, he must have served in many places between 220 and 232, and had subsequently been a *legatus Augusti pro praetore* in Moesia Inferior about 234, as is attested by six inscriptions, and possibly in Germania Inferior (234–235). Under Maximinus Thrax he had been governor of Hispania Tarraconensis (c.235–238), as is demonstrated by about 20 inscriptions.²⁷⁶ In that province he seems to have remained loyal to Maximinus during the rebellion of 238. He may consequently have been forced to inactivity under Gordian III, to return to the fore again under Philip, who seems to have appointed him *praefectus urbi*. In 249 he must have been almost 60 years of age.²⁷⁷ There is a story that Decius disliked his assignment to Illyricum, afraid as he was of what was to be the outcome, but that Philip forced him to go.²⁷⁸

Decius was right. To evade punishment, the soldiers proclaimed him emperor, to all probability with his own consent.²⁷⁹ He assembled an army, invaded Italy in the summer of 249, and beat Philip at Verona. Again, civil war took the lives of quite a few good, experienced soldiers, and weakened frontier defenses.

Philip's son either perished with him or was killed at Rome, and Priscus disappeared without a trace, to quote David Potter.²⁸⁰ Decius went to Rome, had his *adventus* there, and was accepted as a lawful ruler by the senate, under the title of Emperor Quintus Traianus Decius Pius Felix Invictus Augustus, Pontifex Maximus, Pater Patriae, Proconsul, with numbered *tribuniciae potestates* and emperor titles, as all emperors had had.²⁸¹ On the basis of papyrological evidence, we now may assume that Decius climbed the throne in Rome effectively by mid-August.²⁸² At least one contemporary source is fairly positive. In *Oracula Sibyllina* 13.81–3 we read: 'After him [Philip] another king will rule mighty flourishing Rome, skilled in war, emerging from the Dacians, of the number 300 [Trajan Decius].'²⁸³

Decius had some original ideas. Through his adopted extra name, he represented himself as another Trajan.²⁸⁴ Decius presented himself in inscriptions as *restitutor sacrorum et libertatis, reparator disciplinae militaris, fundator sacrae urbis*, and *firmator spei*,²⁸⁵ titles that contain a program aiming at the re-establishment of military discipline and superiority, a new Roman age of hope and security, and the recovery of sacred rites. Decius also issued a very original series of so-called *divi* coins, on which 11 deified emperors were celebrated – Augustus, Vespasian, Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, Septimius Severus, and Severus Alexander.²⁸⁶ In this way Decius put himself in the line of good, legitimate emperors, and in a line of capable men who through statues and coins were still visible in public everywhere in the empire.²⁸⁷ This was a good alternative to a missing dynastic lineage. There is no certainty that he thus emphasized a restoration of the imperial cult, which may have entered a phase of decay from the days of Maximinus.²⁸⁸ In a more traditional way, in his coinage and in inscriptions, Decius emphasized dynastic hopes. His wife Herennia Etruscilla, descended from a mid-Italian senatorial family, was mentioned on milestones and coins. In those media of imperial communication, she was called *mater castrorum* and *mater augustorum*, in a Severan way, and their sons Quintus Herennius Etruscus and Gaius Valens Hostilianus Messius Quintus received the titles *princeps iuventutis* and *nobilissimus caesar*.²⁸⁹ In his imperial representation Decius emphasized his homeland. Septimius Severus and Philip had done so by embellishing their places of origin, Lepcis Magna in North Africa and Philippopolis in Arabia, but Decius went one step further. On coins and in inscriptions he celebrated the *genius Illyrici*, the *genius exercitus Illyriciani*, the *exercitus Inluricus* (sic!), and the province of Dacia, thus giving some of his coinage a geographical focus, and praising the army that had conquered the throne for him and had to defend his home country.²⁹⁰ As Caracalla before him, Decius wished to unite the entire population of the empire behind him in a great religious act. In an edict issued before the end of 249 the emperor urged all inhabitants of the empire to sacrifice to the gods, eat the sacrificial meat, and swear that they had always sacrificed.²⁹¹ Of course many Christians refused to do so, and were punished. In this way the first general empire-wide persecution of the Christians came into being and eventually cost thousands of Christians their lives.²⁹²

In AD 250 problems in the Balkans escalated. Philip's withdrawal of subsidies to the northern tribes, added to the departure of a good part of the Roman Danube armies to Italy, to fight Philip, may have triggered the attack.²⁹³ If we follow the new Dexippus fragments and a few other sources, which summarize events, we get the following picture.²⁹⁴ Probably in the spring of 250, Gothic warriors led by Cniva and Ostrogotha, together with bands belonging to other tribes, such as Carpi and Bastarnae, invaded the Roman provinces Dacia (the target of the Carpi), Moesia Inferior, and Thrace. Cniva and Ostrogotha were no doubt war-lords, '*Heereskönige*,' chosen to lead the bands of warriors. One column of invaders unsuccessfully attacked Marcianopolis in the east of Moesia Inferior, moved southwest along the Maritsa valley, and started to besiege Philippopolis, which was situated on the border between Macedon and Thrace. The other column under Cniva invaded central Moesia Inferior, suffered a setback at Novae against the provincial governor Trebonianus Gallus, unsuccessfully attacked Nicopolis ad Istrum, where many inhabitants of the region had taken refuge, and then moved to Philippopolis, to join the other column. The emperor's army may have driven the Carpi out of Dacia, but was not completely successful against the Goths. It followed Cniva on his march to Philippopolis, but at Beroea (modern Stara Zagora), it was attacked by Cniva and suffered heavy losses. Decius and the remainder of his army fled back to the army camp at Novae, to Gallus' large force, where the emperor reorganized his army. He could not, however, drive the invaders off from Thrace and Moesia Inferior. Nor could he relieve Philippopolis. The garrison of this town, composed of soldiers and local militia, was over-confident and eager to help the emperor to conquer the enemies. Their boldness induced the emperor to warn them in a long letter not to underestimate the Gothic warriors.²⁹⁵ After a prolonged siege, Cniva allied himself with a man called Priscus, as Jordanes tells us. This Priscus had been proclaimed emperor by the Thracian troops in the city, so that he could negotiate with the Goths. The Goths got into the town and went on a rampage. Priscus simply disappeared.²⁹⁶ The other side of one of the new Dexippus fragments, *Scythica Vindobonensia* 195v, makes clear, however, that some 500 Goths stealthily got inside Philippopolis when the soldiers and militia men who defended the city were having a party.²⁹⁷ The Goths took lots of booty and deported many inhabitants, which provided them with good artisans and people who could write and read. The taking of Philippopolis also gave the invaders a good base to undertake raids to all parts of the Moesia and Thrace. Not all Goths stayed there, though. A large part of them tried to return home, north of the Danube, laden with booty and prisoners. Decius and his army attacked them but were lured into a trap in northeast Bulgaria, at Abrittus, and lost the battle. Decius and many of his soldiers lost their lives.²⁹⁸ Of course there were rumors that Decius had been betrayed by Gallus, as there had been when the emperor Gordian III had died after losing the battle at Misiche against the Persians, early in AD 244. There *had* to be betrayal, a Roman emperor could not simply lose.²⁹⁹ Soldiers and civilians in Thrace and Moesia Inferior knew better. The problems and setbacks in the Balkans may have been the cause of trouble elsewhere too. Early in 251 there was news of a

revolt in Rome, led by one Iulius Valens Licinianus, and it was perhaps then that there was a mutiny on the Rhine.³⁰⁰ Decius' defeat and demise on the battlefield was an unheard-of disaster, and it had terrible consequences for Thrace, Moesia Inferior, and Dacia. Marauding barbarian bands may very well have stayed on in those regions until about 269 or even longer. In *Caesares* 34.3 Aurelius Victor tells us that the emperor Claudius wished to expel the Goths who had stayed there for a long time, had built up a strong position, and had nearly become permanent inhabitants.³⁰¹ For the next 20 or so years Decius' successors never had enough armed forces at hand to drive the barbarians out or annihilate them completely, or they had to go and fight elsewhere after initial successes.

Decius was succeeded by Trebonianus Gallus who assembled the remnants of the Roman army in the Balkans and got their support.³⁰² He may have been a senator from Perusia in Italy; not much of his career is known. He started to govern together with Decius' son Hostilianus, who had already been appointed *caesar* about September 250 and was adopted by Gallus, and the emperor's own son Volusianus, who became *princeps iuventutis* and *nobilissimus princeps*.³⁰³ Again a new emperor promised dynastic continuity, as he tried to legitimize himself through a connection with a former ruler. Gallus bought off the Goths by awarding them an annual tribute and lending them the opportunity to go back to their homes with their booty and prisoners, mainly taken from Philipopolis, and went to Rome, with his successors designate. One of them, Hostilianus, soon died, in the autumn of 251.³⁰⁴ Gallus may have had connections with senators who had been important during the rebellion against Maximinus Thrax in 238. The man he appointed to be his deputy in legal matters (*iudex sacrarum cognitionum vice Caesaris*) in Syria Coele was an Anonymous who might be Aspasius Paternus. In 268, after a good career, this man became *consul II ordinarius* together with the emperor, Gallienus. In 238 he had been charged with collecting recruits in Aemilia and Liguria (*missus ad iuniores legendos per Aemiliam et Liguriam*) to fight Maximinus.³⁰⁵

During Gallus' reign the Roman empire entered a period of serious political and military crisis, which eventually had widespread repercussions in imperial administration, the structure of the imperial defenses, monetary policies, appointment strategies, and even imperial ideology and representation.³⁰⁶ Moreover there was a new outbreak of the plague, which again must have taken many lives, including many among the military, as the Antonine plague had done before, and during its later stages may have inflated many prices, as under Commodus. Added to heavy losses at the Balkan front and in the east, this must in segments of the imperial frontier have diminished military strength to unacceptable levels.³⁰⁷ Expressing a negative opinion about Gallus, Eutropius in 9.5 says that the reign of Gallus, his son, and Hostilianus was only remarkable for the plague ('sola pestilentia et morbis atque aegritudinibus notus eorum principatus fuit'). Zonaras must have found some more precise information about the plague in his sources. In XII 21 he tells us that in those days epidemics and disease befell the world, starting from Ethiopia and spreading over almost every land, both east and west, lasting for 15 years, and denuding many of the

cities of their inhabitants. In *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII 21.9, speaking about civil strife in Alexandria, Egypt, Eusebius observes:

Yet men marvel and are at a loss as to whence come the constant plagues, whence the grievous diseases, whence the various forms of death, whence the manifold and great human mortality, why this greatest of cities no longer contains within it so great a multitude of inhabitants.

In VII 22 he gives an impressive report about the plague in Alexandria about 260, when it was still raging.³⁰⁸

In 252 another round of Persian wars took off. In his *Res Gestae Divi Saporis* 4 the Persian king maintains that the Roman emperor had lied to him and had done wrong to Armenia. The real reasons may have been that the Romans had stopped paying tribute, probably because much money was now going to the Goths, and that Shapur wished to eliminate Arsacid power in Armenia. Shapur sent his son Hormizd into Armenia to conquer it, which in 252–253 he successfully did. The Arsacid ruler, Tiridates, sought refuge within the Roman empire.³⁰⁹ The Persian king went northwest along the river Euphrates, taking or passing by Dura-Europos on his way, and in 253 defeated a Roman army at Barbalissos, at a bend of the river, on the right bank, not far south of Zeugma. Subsequently, in the same year, the Persians took Antioch by surprise, probably helped by Mar-eades, a popular local figure who had fled the city and gone over to the Persian side.³¹⁰ In one of the extant fragments of book 23, 23.5.3, Ammianus Marcellinus relates that a crowd in a theatre at Antioch suddenly noticed looting Persians running around and was decimated by their arrows. Well-to-do citizens, possibly being afraid of deportation to the Persian empire, had fled the city, but the other inhabitants had stayed there.³¹¹ If we believe Libanius, *Or.* 11.158, some Antiochenes may have put up some resistance against the Persian attack. Many Antiochenes were deported to the Persian empire, a leading figure among whom was the Christian bishop Demetrianus.³¹²

An interesting observation is made by Zosimus in 1.27.1: the monarchs (= Gallus and his sons) were not able to defend the state, could not protect the people against Goths, Borani, Urugundi, and Carpi, and neglected anything happening outside Rome, which is not true, but may have reflected the state of mind Zosimus found in his sources. Mental attitudes of this kind do not signify readily acceptance of imperial authority, particularly if this could not be supported by long-term dynastic claims, or a general *eunoia*. So it cannot come as a surprise that Gallus and his family were soon removed from power. One of his generals, Marcus Aemilius Aemilianus, a senator who was by then *legatus Augusti pro praetore Moesiae Superioris*, gained some success against marauders in the Balkans and was in the summer of 253 promptly proclaimed emperor by his soldiers. The coup may have happened on his own initiative. In 12.21 Zonaras tells us that Aemilianus had proposed to the soldiers that they could receive the money that now went to the barbarians (*i.e.* Gallus' tribute to the Goths), and in *Caesares* 31.1 Aurelius Victor writes that Aemilianus seized the highest power through bribing the soldiers.³¹³ According to Eutropius or his source, Aemilianus was

obscurissime natus (Eutropius 9.6), which may signify that he was not originally a senator.³¹⁴ Aemilianus marched to Italy, thus denuding the embattled frontier of the Lower Danube, and defeated Gallus at Interamna, probably in mid-253.³¹⁵ It seems that many of Gallus' soldiers had deserted to the other side. It is possible that Gallus, having reinforced the army of the east, was short of seasoned troops. One unit he may have missed, for example, was *legio II Parthica*, that may already have arrived at Apamea in Syria, its second home in the third century.³¹⁶ This may be the reason why he had sent a trusted senator, Publius Licinius Valerianus, to Raetia, to assemble an army by taking *vexillationes* from units serving at the Rhine and Upper Danube frontiers.³¹⁷

In two of our sources there is a remarkable story about Aemilianus. After he had been proclaimed emperor, he wrote to the senate, promising that he would rid Thrace of barbarians and campaign against Persia, and that he, having turned the realm over to the senate, would do everything and fight as their general.³¹⁸ From these texts we see that even now the east and the Balkans were still the main theatres of war. Invaders were marauding there within Roman territory.

In the summer of 253, the troops that had been assembled by Valerian proclaimed him emperor, probably because they had started to despise Aemilianus; in the words of Zonaras 12.22, they were reckoning that Aemilianus was unworthy of the realm both as ignoble and groveling, and, to be sure, that Valerian was better suited for the rule because he would, for certain, assume affairs in a more authoritative fashion. Aemilianus was eliminated very soon, in the early autumn of 253. His troops, distrusting his chances and loathing the idea of again killing fellow soldiers, slew him near Spoleto in Italy, and went over to Valerian, who went to Rome and was accepted by the senate, which also appointed his son Gallienus *caesar*, and very soon, before 22 October, *augustus*, as a co-ruler with his father.³¹⁹ Both of them became ordinary consuls of the year 254, on the first day of that year. Publius Licinius Valerianus was an elderly man (born probably during the 190s), an Italian senator who may have followed a fairly military career. He had been a *consul suffectus* before 238, had in that eventful year joined the senatorial party, and had probably been one of Decius' supporters. He had married into an important, status-high Italian senatorial family, the Egnatii. His wife had been Egnatia Mariniana and must have died before her husband became emperor; she became a *diva* after Valerian's accession.³²⁰ Publius Licinius Egnatius Gallienus was born about 218. Nothing is known about his preceding career.³²¹ Valerian adopted quite a few *restitutor* titles. According to Potter, he also used Severan slogans and images on his coins that had not been in use since 235.³²² His deputy for legal matters, Lucius Valerius Poplicola Balbinus Maximus, was the son of one of the 20 senators who had opposed Maximinus Thrax in 238, someone of an exceptional patrician pedigree.³²³ More so than his predecessors, Valerian shared imperial power with his son Gallienus and – from about 257 – his grandsons Valerian the younger and Saloninus, probably to safeguard imperial presence in important defensive zones.³²⁴

Valerian went to the east, to fight the Persians who, after taking Antioch, had dispersed in groups to plunder everywhere in Syria. Underway he may have split up the province of Asia, as Septimius Severus had done in Syria and Britain.³²⁵ In

the eastern theatre of war remnants of the Roman army apparently had reassembled after the defeat at Barbalissos, and local rulers such as Uranius Antoninus, a priest and political leader at Emesa, had mobilized their forces. Almost nothing is known of the events that followed. Uranius seems to have annihilated a group of plundering Persians, and other Roman units may have been successful as well. Uranius Antoninus was proclaimed emperor, but disappeared soon.³²⁶ Whether Valerian's arrival had something to do with Uranius' disappearance is not known. In 253–254 minting of imperial coins at Antioch, which had been interrupted in the middle of 253, began again, but not in gold, which would have been a clear sign of imperial presence.³²⁷ The Persians withdrew and may have been harassed by Roman troops from strongholds along the Euphrates.³²⁸ Shapur must consequently have decided to eliminate those fortified towns first in a next campaign, after his army would have been restored. Valerian, having arrived at Antioch, where his presence is indicated in January 255 by an inscription containing a letter to the city of Philadelphia (18 January 255), inaugurated the reconstruction of the city.³²⁹ After a while he may have gone to Samosata, where another mint was opened.³³⁰ Dura and probably some other fortresses were recovered too. According to Feissel and Gascou, Dura and Apadana got a higher status after 254, the year of their recovery.³³¹ Apparently a *praetentura* was restored here, *i.e.* the militarily fortified zone that had existed here since about 221.³³² In texts dating back to AD 252–256, P. Euphrates 3 and 4, a juridical issue is submitted to its prefect (*eparchos*), Iulius Proculus who is acting as *praepositus praetenturae*.³³³

There was unrest in North Africa too. To strengthen its defense, under Septimius Severus and Caracalla a *nova praetentura* in Mauretania Caesariensis had been installed there.³³⁴ An epigraphic text AE 1928, 38, from Saldae in North Africa, was dedicated by *iuvenes, ob pulsum moenibus hostem*. Berber tribes had been harassing Roman communities for some time, probably from the days of Trebonianus Gallus, or even earlier. Tripolitania seems to have been a hit from the times of the emperor Philip.³³⁵ There were rebellions and usurpations too. The uprising of AD 238 is well known, but there may have been some minor usurpations as well.³³⁶ About 252–254, the Berber problem was countered by the governor of Numidia, Gaius Macrinus Decianus and the governor of Mauretania Caesariensis, Marcus Aurelius Vitalis.³³⁷ At that time, in the opening year of his reign, Valerian reinstalled *legio III Augusta* at Lambaesis. This unit had been disbanded under the administration of Gordian III, to punish it for its action against the two older Gordians in AD 238.³³⁸ Some other units that were involved in the struggles are mentioned in epigraphic sources, an *ala Thracum* and horsemen commanded by Quintus Gargilius Martialis, who is mentioned as a *praepositus cohorti singularem et vexillationi equitum Maurorum in territorio Auziensi praetendentium*.³³⁹ This Martialis was a *decurio duarum coloniarum Auziensis et Rusguniensis*, and is called *patronus provinciae*, but he was also the commander of a Roman military unit.³⁴⁰ In Mauretania the problems soon returned, necessitating the institution of a special command over Africa, Numidia, and Mauretania, to which the emperors appointed a former prefect of one of the imperial fleets, Marcus Cornelius

Octavianus, who successfully fought the Berbers.³⁴¹ A few years later, probably during Gallienus' sole reign, Aelius Aelianus was honored because he had crushed the Berber enemies again, 'ob prostratam gentem Bavarum Mesegnentium praedasque omnes ac familias eorum abductas' (because he had put down the tribe of the Bavares Mesegentes, and carried off all their booty and families).³⁴²

Valerian may have underestimated events happening in yet another theatre of war. In 254 Gothic warrior groups and other bands, called Borani, maybe encouraged by Persian successes in nearby Armenia in 253, attacked Pityus, an outpost on the eastern shores of the Black Sea. At first the Borani were not successful because the Roman commander, Succesianus, knew how to defend the town. But Valerian, instead of reinforcing this advance stronghold and leaving Succesianus at his post, appointed him *praefectus praetorio* and summoned him, with a part of his troops, to Antioch, to assist in rebuilding the city, as if this task were more urgent.³⁴³ In 255 or 256 the Borani took Pityus, where they found ships and commodities that enabled them to launch attacks over the Black Sea, where they took Trapezus and gained an enormous booty.³⁴⁴ Something similar seems to have happened in the Crimea, where invading barbarians, probably Goths, had taken power, and found boats and gear to get over the Black Sea and plunder the northwestern parts of Asia Minor, where in about 258 they took and plundered several rich cities, such as Chalcedon, Nicomedia, and Nicaea. They came simultaneously over land and sea.³⁴⁵ Many cities began to build walls. The council of Nicaea showed them on a series of unique Nicene coins, issued about 259–261, which broke through strong local traditions in putting images and legends on coins.³⁴⁶ According to Zosimus (1.36.1), Valerian did not dare to send one of his generals there because he was afraid of ensuing usurpations of the imperial power. He sent a certain Felix, probably a trusted old friend, to Byzantium, which became one of the centers of Roman defenses, and went in person to the Pontic regions.³⁴⁷

Gallienus had stayed in the west, to put things in order in the Balkans, where he fought plundering warrior bands from about 254 until far into 256.³⁴⁸ It seems that Goths and other invaders had been incited to get over the border again by Aemilianus' departure to Italy. Even the Marcomanni, quiet until now, may have begun to plunder Pannonia, but information about this is coming from a chronologically not very accurate summary written by Zosimus (1.29.2). According to the same author, (1.29.2–3), plundering bands even reached Greece, where people built walls across the Isthmus of Corinth and around Athens. Thessalonica was besieged.³⁴⁹ This may have happened later, though, about 262.³⁵⁰

Gallienus had his own mint to produce his soldiers' pay, near at hand at Viminacium near Sirmium.³⁵¹ It seems that he was fairly successful and developed new tactics to roll up roving bands.³⁵² Up to his times, when invading groups had penetrated into the hinterlands of the Roman frontiers, and had split up in many rapidly moving marauding detachments, Roman commanders did not have sufficient cavalry to track down and destroy such groups, and the best they could do was choose a strategically advantageous point and wait for the barbarians to concentrate again, in order to go home over the border with their loot and prisoners.

As yet most invaders did not try to settle down in conquered land within the Roman borders. In this way the Roman forces could defeat returning barbarians in battle and take back goods and prisoners. Gallienus, however, began to expand the mounted detachments that belonged to the legions from 120 to 726 men per legion, and organized new cavalry squadrons as well, which he largely may have recruited in North Africa and Dalmatia.³⁵³ Besides he still had the *equites singulares* at his disposal. One reason why Gallienus put into effect this important military reform may have been that the Goths and other tribes who had been invading the Lower Danube regions since about 250 did not only have good heavy infantrymen and lightly armed skirmishers, but also a large cavalry force, as Dexippus tells us.³⁵⁴ And so did the steppe tribes who also started to threaten Roman borders. There was another reason, though. In this way Gallienus had the tools to track down spread-out enemies, and destroy them, thus preventing large territories from being thoroughly plundered over a prolonged period, after which they would have lost value as tax and requisition territories.³⁵⁵ There had always been scouts (*exploratores*), but this was something new. Gallienus did not create a 100 per cent cavalry army, but combined his mounted detachments with traditional *vexillationes*, auxiliaries, and Germanic *numeri*, which was a wise tactical decision.³⁵⁶ When Gallienus had to leave the Danube frontier, in 256, he came to an agreement with the Marcomannic king Attalus, whose daughter Pipa seems to have become the emperor's concubine.³⁵⁷ As far as we know, the Marcomanni agreed to furnish troops in their own formations, and to assist the defenders of the Pannonian border, that is the frontier of the most thriving and populated area of 'Illyricum,' the western half of modern Hungary.³⁵⁸

One of the men who may have helped Gallienus in creating his new army was Aureolus, an officer who rapidly became quite important within Gallienus' entourage. In 1.40.1 Zosimus calls him the commander of the cavalry, and in Zonaras 12.25 he is mentioned as *pasès archôn tès hippou kai mega dunamenos*,³⁵⁹ which indicates his strong position within Gallienus' new army. That cavalry played an important part in these forces is illustrated by imperial coins minted at Milan, from about 259/260 one of their main bases, in the name of this emperor and praising *fides equitum*, i.e. the loyalty of the mounted forces, as well as *fides legionum* (the loyalty of the detachments taken from various legions), *fides praetorianorum*, and *fides exercitus*.³⁶⁰ The Milanese imperial mint about 261–262 also produced Gallienus' 'legionary coins,' a series that celebrated many legions' loyalty to the emperor Gallienus, that is the *fides* of the legionary *vexillationes* that belonged to Gallienus' field army.³⁶¹ Was it logistically wise to lay more emphasis on cavalry? A larger cavalry force would cost more supplies,³⁶² for example fodder, harnesses, and other commodities for horses, but this must have been outweighed by obvious tactical advantages.

In those years the western frontiers came under pressure. After Valerian had taken a good part of the western and Upper Danube forces with him to Italy to fight Aemilianus, Alamannic infiltration into the Agri Decumates and the Transdanubian parts of Raetia had been intensified. Early in 254 the Raetian *limes* was

largely destroyed by Alamannic bands.³⁶³ According to John Drinkwater, chronic Germanic raids appear to have unsettled the civil population east of the Rhine and north of the Danube. There are signs of civilians moving into forts and, perhaps, of the upper classes deserting the region entirely.³⁶⁴ There is no direct evidence for a regular structure of local government in the region after 254, and it seems that there are almost no military inscriptions later than AD 249.³⁶⁵ Serious problems also arose in Gaul. About AD 256 Germanic bands, Franks and Alamanni, started to cross the Rhine frontier and plunder the Gauls.³⁶⁶ In the middle of the third century Franks were still considered to be the people who inhabited the Germanic northwest, Saxons, Frisians, and Chauci included.³⁶⁷

In January 257 Valerian, who by October 256 may have returned from the east, and Gallienus both became *consules ordinarii* again, at either Rome or Cologne. They took several important decisions. The younger Valerian, a son of Gallienus, and his wife Salonina, who had been appointed *caesar* about 256, now became the representative of the dynasty at the Danube border, at Sirmium, under tutelage of Ingenus, probably a military man who now was appointed *dux* of the armies there. Young Valerian died (he was perhaps murdered) about the beginning of 258, but Ingenus seems to have kept his extraordinary position. Saloninus, Gallienus' second son, became the heir apparent of the throne.³⁶⁸ Michel Christol believes that already in this year, 258, Ingenus usurped imperial power after a *clades Valeriana* suffered by Valerian junior but *clades* with a name undoubtedly applies to a generally known, important disaster, and consequently to a defeat suffered by the ruling senior emperor Valerian.³⁶⁹ Gallienus went to Gaul to track down and fight the bands that had invaded that region, and Valerian was to return to the east, to deal a decisive blow to the Persians who, in 256, had taken Dura-Europos, and probably had destroyed the military district there, the *praetentura* that had existed along the middle Euphrates.³⁷⁰ In 257 Valerian also started a new persecution of the Christians, which was made fiercer in 258, and was aiming particularly at rich Christians, matrons among them, and clergy. Christian possessions, such as cemeteries and buildings used as churches, were confiscated.³⁷¹ This persecution was not a by-product of a general, empire-wide *supplicatio* to the gods, as Decius' persecution had been, but intended to disorganize and impoverish Christian communities, and to line the emperor's pocket.

An inscription from Aphrodisias, found in 1982 and containing a letter by Valerian and Gallienus to a private person, shows that Valerian in 256 or 257 was at Cologne with Gallienus. Charlotte Roueché, who published the text, opts for 256, but it is more probable that Valerian went to Rome first, to assume his fourth consulate together with Gallienus at the start of 257. Gallienus became consul for the third time. The concluding lines of *CJ* 6.42.15 seem to suggest that Valerian was in Rome by 10 October 256.³⁷² Subsequently both *augusti* must have gone to Cologne, where they still were in August 257.³⁷³ The city was renamed after both emperors and was now called Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensis Valeriana Gallieniana.³⁷⁴ Most of Gallienus' mint and bullion was mid 257 transferred from Viminacium to Cologne.³⁷⁵ Already in 256 the new mint at Cologne produced coins that testify to military reinforcements.³⁷⁶ One of the coins of Valerian and

Gallienus, an *antoninanus*, carries Valerian on the obverse and the legend *Gallienus cum exercitu suo* on the reverse, pointing at the emperors' diarchy and at Gallienus' new successful army.³⁷⁷

Gallienus now began fighting the Franks and Alamanni. In 1.30.2f., unfortunately a chronologically confused summary, Zosimus indicates that Gallienus, being outnumbered by Germanic invaders, left it to some Germanic allies to defend the northwestern part of Germania Inferior, and ran himself from one river crossing to another, fighting one group of invaders after the other. He was called *Restitutor Galliarum* and *Germanicus Maximus*, and a multitude of imperial coins celebrated his *Victoriae Germanicae*.³⁷⁸ Coin hoards hidden in the ground testify to serious devastations in Cologne's hinterlands, especially in 258–259.³⁷⁹

My hypothesis is that Valerian, starting from Cologne, went all along the Rhine and Danube border regions to the east, assembling *vexillationes* from the legions, *auxilia*, and Germanic allies on his way. In some border camps his son and co-emperor Gallienus may have stationed detachments from Britain in their place.³⁸⁰ The Persian king Shapur's *Res Gestae Divi Saporis* 9–11 indicates that Valerian's army consisted of detachments and units from almost every part of the Roman empire.³⁸¹ Valerian had concentrated detachments from many sides before. Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 32.1f. says about Valerian's army in 253: 'At milites, qui contracti undique apud Raetias ob instans bellum morabantur, Licinio Valeriano imperium deferunt.' Marching on, Valerian may have done some fighting, for example in the Balkans. At any rate, the *terminus ante quem* for Valerian's arrival in Syria, was May 258. A text in the *Codex Iustinianus* (5.3.5) seems to prove that by this time he was at Antioch again, where his mint produced money for his soldiers. The imperial silver money that was needed for military pay was already utterly debased and consisted of billon or copper coated with a thin layer of silver. Valerian forbade local communities to produce their own coinage, thus putting an end to an age-old practice.³⁸² The emperor may have needed the metal stocks of local communities to produce debased *antoniniani* for which he needed little silver plate but a fair quantity of the more basic metal that was normally used to mint local coins.

Before his arrival, a Roman army consisting of detachments of the forces of the east may have fought the Persians to a standstill and may have prevented a follow-up of their success at Dura-Europos, which the Romans had not been able to relieve, though. In the beginning of 257 coins of Valerian celebrated a *Victoria Parthica*, and presented the emperor as *Restitutor Orientis*.³⁸³ This may have been more than empty propaganda. Another possibility is that Shapur, in vain, had besieged one of the Roman strongholds in Mesopotamia. What happened next in the east is not clear. In 258 and/or 259 Valerian tried to stop the raids from the north in Asia Minor, without much success, if we may believe Zosimus, who in 1.36.1 relates that Valerian achieved nothing else than being a burden to the cities there. In 260 Shapur started to besiege Edessa, an important stronghold and storage center, probably after taking Carrhae and Nisibis first, in the preceding year, although in his RGDS he tells us that he besieged Edessa and

Carrhae, when Valerian and his army came near.³⁸⁴ Returning from the northern parts of Asia Minor to the Mesopotamian theatre of war, in 259, Valerian lost many of his soldiers by disease, particularly among his North African units, which was a serious loss because they constituted one of his best cavalry forces, much needed in fighting Persians or rounding up invading groups.³⁸⁵ There is a parallel with what had happened to Severus Alexander's northern wing about 232–233. Returning from the north to Alexander's main army, it had lost many lives too. Valerian must have returned to the Persian front in 259 – not later, for the war around Edessa must have taken time. In *Caesares* 32.5 Aurelius Victor relates that Valerian waged a long and indecisive war against the Persians, and then was ambushed by Shapur, probably in the spring of 260.

Because of a lack of sufficient military strength Valerian avoided offering battle in the open field, nor did he try to relieve Edessa. He probably waited for reinforcements from the west, which never came. To divert Persian forces, he may also have sent one of his allies, the Palmyrene prince Odaenathus, to southern Mesopotamia, down the Euphrates, via strongholds along the traditional Palmyrene trade route to Characene. Jewish sources indicate that Odaenathus destroyed Nehardea there in 259. The Jewish population fled to Pumbadita, the Jewish name of Peroz-Shapur or Misiche, where some 15 years earlier Gordian III had been defeated.³⁸⁶ It is not clear when Odaenathus had become the most important Roman ally at the eastern border. According to Petrus Patricius *FHG* IV 187, fragment 10, at one stage of his career he seems to have tried to become Shapur's friend, but he was rudely rebuffed. In 257–258 he was in inscriptions at Palmyra proudly bearing the titles lord of Palmyra and *consularis*.³⁸⁷

In *FHG* IV 187, fragment 9 Petrus Patricius relates that Valerian was afraid of being defeated by the Persians because the plague had decimated his forces, particularly the Moorish troops. Having collected an enormous amount of gold, he tried to buy Shapur off, but the Persian king knew of Valerian's problems and awaited his chances. This amassing of precious metal may be another reason why Valerian stopped local coinage. He needed all the bullion he could lay hands on, not only to pay his soldiers, but also to buy gold to give it to the Persians, as Philip had done earlier.³⁸⁸ This was one way to get it in a period of declining mining activities.³⁸⁹

The Persians were not very successful in besieging Edessa. Successfully making a sortie, the garrison of this town inflicted damage upon Shapur's army, which encouraged Valerian to attack, to his misery.³⁹⁰ In Continuator Dionis fragment 3, *FHG* IV 193, we are told that Macrianus, the emperor's logistical chief who was residing at the well-stocked stronghold of Samosata, refused to send help to Valerian.³⁹¹ The emperor lost the battle, and was, together with many of his higher cadre, taken prisoner by Shapur and deported to the Persian empire.³⁹² The Persian king vainly tried to trap Macrianus as well. Zonaras 12.23 and Syncellus 466 offer a different version; they relate that Valerian was confronted with rebellion because of starvation in his own army, and went to the Persians to save his own life. It is possible that these writers found something about logistical

problems in their sources, but we should realize that they both are standing in a Christian tradition and probably liked to depict the persecutor Valerian in dark colors, as did Lactantius in his *De mortibus persecutorum* 5.³⁹³ Valerian's defeat and captivity were an unheard-of disgrace, and an invitation to many eager tribes and warrior groups, who must have heard about it soon enough, to take their own chances and get over the Roman borders. Passing by the stronghold of Samosata, still defended by Macrianus, Shapur went into Cappadocia and North Syria, and divided his army into plundering columns.

When was Valerian taken prisoner, or in other words, when did his reign end? In P. Oxy. 2186, written in year seven of Valerian, on 28 August 260, Valerian, Gallienus, and Saloninus are mentioned, but P. Oxy. 1476 (of 29 September 260) is dated in the first year of Macrianus and Quietus, the sons of the pretender Macrianus who came to power in the east in September 260.³⁹⁴ In the *Codex Iustinianus* two texts (*CJ* 5.42.2 and 10.16.2 of 15 May 260) mention Valerian, Gallienus, and the younger Valerian (*i.e.* Saloninus). A fragmentary inscription from Vindonissa (AD 260) mentions just one *augustus* and one *caesar* (*i.e.* Gallienus and Saloninus).³⁹⁵ Another indication is that on 22 July 260 a new bishop of Rome, Dionysius, was elected.³⁹⁶ This could not have been done when Valerian, a persecutor of the Christians, still was in full power. The date given in the sources is 22 July 259, but that day was not a Sunday, the traditional day to do such things, as König demonstrates. The conclusion must be that Valerian was taken prisoner in the spring of 260, so that the news could travel to several border regions where subsequently usurpations took place in the summer of 260, and to Rome, where the Christians there could start thinking about the election of a new bishop.³⁹⁷

Why did Valerian not receive any help from the west? Gallienus, his colleague and lawful successor, was pinned down in Italy, which in 259 had been invaded by two bands of Germanic fighters, one coming through Raetia and another one through western Switzerland, where they had destroyed the town of Aventicum. Neither was a tribe nor even an army. The raiders were not migrating tribesmen but bands of young warriors exploiting current Roman weaknesses to win fame and booty.³⁹⁸ A third possibly Frankish band went through Gaul to Spain, where they destroyed Tarraco, grabbed some boats, and even plundered parts of North Africa.³⁹⁹ This may have happened in either 256 or, preferably, 259–260. The Germanic invaders were probably incited to take their chances by the steady disappearance of Roman defenders from the *limes* to the east. Some of the Vindolanda tablets show that already in the first century AD hardly two thirds of a unit were normally at their post on the border, and that many soldiers and officers had other things to do or were just missing.⁴⁰⁰ Now, after Valerian had taken with him so many detachments, in 253 to his army in Italy and in 254 and 257 to the east, and Gallienus had organized his army of *vexillationes* plus cavalry detachments, many camps on the Rhine and Danube *limites* must have been fairly empty, even if Gallienus had stationed detachments from Britain in some camps. In earlier times, for example in 234–235, heavy recruiting had provided replacements, but there is no evidence to show that something similar happened under Valerian. The army of Italy must have become small as well.⁴⁰¹ The 'Alban

legion,' *legio II Parthica*, for example, camped at Apamea in Syria.⁴⁰² So it does not come as a surprise that one Germanic column could only be stopped – in the neighborhood of Ravenna – by an Italian/urban militia and some remaining troops after having stayed in Italy for quite a while.⁴⁰³ Another column was defeated by a similar mixed army in Etruria.⁴⁰⁴ Germanic bands must have wintered in north Italy, and were then early in 260 defeated by Gallienus at Milan, the emperor's new headquarters.⁴⁰⁵ Gallienus and his new army must have retreated from Gaul to Italy, leaving some forces behind under the nominal command of young Saloninus who was to be advised and tutored by Silvanus and Postumus, the latter being a *dux* with a special command on the Rhine.⁴⁰⁶ The remnants of the Germanic warrior groups retreated, with booty and deported Italian prisoners, through Raetia, where they were again beaten by an army consisting of soldiers from the Rhine and Upper Danube frontiers and local militia under the command of Genialis, who was even able to take back their booty and Italian prisoners. This happened on 24–25 April 260, as is indicated by the Augsburg inscription, AE 1993, 1231b (11 September 260).⁴⁰⁷ This text proves that the Germanic invasion of Italy reached this final stage in April 260, and consequently cannot have started in that same year. Physically and logistically that would have been simply impossible. Beginning already in 259 this invasion lured Gallienus and his army of infantry *vexillationes* plus cavalry squadrons away from the Rhine frontier, where he had been campaigning since 257, and prevented him to return to the Middle and Lower Danube frontiers. The events in Italy and south Germany must have been followed fairly soon by the terrible news coming from the east, which triggered quite a few usurpations, some of which, for example at the Danube border, had already been impending.⁴⁰⁸ In the Balkans the situation was bad indeed. Raiding had gone on since about 249, and Dacia may have been practically lost. In 1.37.3 Zosimus tells us that some cities in 'Illyricum' were almost empty owing to the effects of the plague and the invasions. After the news of Valerian's downfall had arrived the *dux* of the remaining forces, Ingenuus, took to rebellion, but was rapidly defeated and killed at Mursa in Pannonia by a part of Gallienus' forces under the command of Aureolus. In one of our literary sources we read that Gallienus himself, rapidly leaving Gaul, led his army to Illyricum but this cannot be right. Gallienus went into north Italy. Ingenuus' usurpation was continued by Regalianus, who was quickly eliminated as well, either by Aureolus or by Sarmatian invaders.⁴⁰⁹ These successes, added to ongoing fighting in Italy, prevented Gallienus from reacting quickly to yet another usurpation, Postumus' coup at Cologne in Gaul. A Germanic band, after having plundered in Gaul and concentrated its forces again, tried to get back home into Germany, loaded with booty, but was awaited and defeated in the neighborhood of Cologne by soldiers of the regional *dux* Postumus, who was planning to leave the booty taken from the enemy to his men, against the will of Saloninus' tutor, Silvanus, who wished to give the goods back to the original owners. This conflict resulted in the summer of 260 in a military uprising and Postumus' usurpation of imperial power. He besieged Silvanus and Saloninus at Cologne, took the city, and killed both the prince and his

tutor.⁴¹⁰ Apparently continuous fighting against Germanic bands of warriors prevented Postumus to turn against Gallienus, who in his turn never could take enough time to eliminate Postumus. John Drinkwater claims that Postumus wisely restricted himself to the Gauls, Britain, and the Iberian Peninsula, and never tried to conquer the whole empire.⁴¹¹ In his self-representation on coins he showed to have a strong predilection for Hercules, the divine hero who through his labors had made the world safe for inhabitation.⁴¹²

Gallienus fortified Vindonissa (now Windisch in Switzerland) against Postumus and the Alamanni, and concentrated parts of his forces in Milan, under Aureolus.⁴¹³ He tried to finish off Postumus' Gallic empire in 261, in which he was not successful, probably because he had to break off his actions in order to go east, to fight invaders who had done much harm to Bithynia, Asia, and Greece, logistically and fiscally important regions of Gallienus' part of the empire.⁴¹⁴ He may have taken back Raetia, though, which still in Augustus/September 260 had been a part of Postumus' realm. On 17 September of that year the dedicatory inscription on an altar to Victory from Augsburg, AE 1993, 1231b, mentions Postumus as ruling emperor and as one of the two consuls of the year.⁴¹⁵ The Roman territory in southwest Germany (the Agri Decumates) now became an embattled no-man's land between two contending emperors, and was progressively occupied by Alamanni who had been infiltrating there since about 254.⁴¹⁶ During the 260s this territory virtually ceased to be a part of the Roman empire. Gallienus may now have created a military zone, a *praetentura*, from Milan to Raetia, under Aureolus' command, who according to Aurelius Victor in later years 'per Raetias legionibus praeesset.' He may have been inspired by Marcus Aurelius who in 168 had installed a *praetentura Italiae et Alpium*.⁴¹⁷ Verona, like Milan situated at the end of important Alpine passes, was fortified.⁴¹⁸

In the east the Persians had taken a more northward route than they had done in 253, and passing by Edessa and Samosata had penetrated into Cappadocia, Cilicia, and northern Syria. They had split up into groups, as they had done seven years earlier, in order to assemble as much booty and as many deported prisoners as they could.⁴¹⁹ One of their southern columns took Antioch again,⁴²⁰ another column hit upon stiff resistance at Caesarea in Cappadocia, where a Demosthenes had rallied local and Roman forces,⁴²¹ and in Cilicia a Persian column was harassed by Ballista, a Roman officer who had assembled Roman soldiers. Valerian's master of logistics, Macrianus, held his own at Samosata, probably with a lot of supplies and money.⁴²² Nor did Edessa capitulate to the Persians. More to the south, in the region of Palmyra and the Euphrates, Odaenathus, having recruited Syrian country folk (Roman citizens since 212!) and survivors of Valerian's army in addition to his own Palmyrene forces, successfully attacked Persian detachments.⁴²³ These setbacks, probably added to a shortage of supplies, convinced Shapur to return to his own empire. He was heavily hindered, however, by Odaenathus and the garrison of Edessa, to which he even had to hand over his booty, if we may believe Petrus Patricius *FHG* IV, 187, fragment 11. According to this author, the Persians congratulated one another that they, retreating to the east, had successfully crossed the river Euphrates. In August/September 260 Macrianus

made common cause with Ballista, and usurped imperial power, with which he invested his two sons, young Macrianus and Quietus. The official reason was that he himself was lame in one of his legs. Ballista became the praetorian prefect of the two young emperors. Their army was split into two: one part of it went to the west, with father and son Macrianus, and was thoroughly defeated at Mursa in Pannonia by Aureolus. The other part under Ballista and Quietus was annihilated by Odaenathus who had opted for Gallienus and now became this emperor's most important agent in Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Roman Arabia, and in 267–268 also in eastern Asia Minor, with the titles *dux Romanorum* and *corrector totius Orientis*,⁴²⁴ which together amounted to a kind of *maius imperium* over the Roman governors and forces in this region. From 262 onwards the Palmyrene prince called himself also Shahanshah, king of kings, thus combining Roman and Persian titles. As a matter of fact Odaenathus was becoming a near-independent warlord who made his own decisions and maintained his position through the personal loyalty of his armed forces. The emperor kept the prerogative, however, to appoint governors in Odaenathus' sphere of influence.⁴²⁵

In Egypt the ruin of Macrianus *cum suis* led to a usurpation of imperial power by the prefect of Egypt, Lucius Musius Aemilianus, who had been in favor of Macrianus and Ballista, and now probably made a forward move to prevent his own demise.⁴²⁶ His coup led to street fighting in Alexandria, that at this time also tremendously suffered from the plague. In 262 one of Gallienus' fleet commanders, a certain Aurelius Theodotus, eliminated Aemilianus, finished off a shadowy would-be usurper called Memor, and reunited Egypt with the empire of Gallienus.⁴²⁷ According to the Anonymus Continuator Dionis, FHG IV, fragment 4, the Mauretanian officer Memor was on a logistical mission in Egypt, but seemed to strive after *res novae*. He was immediately killed by his own soldiers. Like Aemilianus, Theodotus and governors succeeding him had to cope with unrest at the southern borders of Egypt, caused by inroads by a Nubian tribe, the Blemmyes. Under Gallienus they plundered parts of Egypt from about AD 259 to 264. Obviously the Blemmyes saw fit to make such inroads after periods of weak Roman authority in Egypt and when civil strife was rampant there. Some Libyan tribes acted the same way.⁴²⁸

In 261 there may have been some minor usurpations in the Balkans too, led by Valens and Piso, two senators. According to Goltz and Hartmann, Macrianus, before marching to the west in 261, sent Piso ahead to occupy Achaëa and chase away the Gallienic governor Valens, a military man. Both may have become usurpers, though short-lived ones.⁴²⁹

In the period of joint rule with his father Gallienus had followed Valerian in his appointment policies, ideology and imperial representation, but from 260 onwards Gallienus turned out to be an original ruler. He stopped persecuting the Christians, and became the first emperor to write a formal letter to Christian bishops.⁴³⁰ He no longer appointed senators to army posts or militarily tinged positions within the administration, and began to give the title *protectores* to his most important officers, *i.e.* the centurions and higher cadre of his mobile army, which suggested a more personal than formal relationship.⁴³¹ The emperor

himself was the protector of the entire empire, and they were his.⁴³² Gallienus also intensified the military representation on his coins, gave his best coins and medallions to his military cadre, and presented himself as an almost superhuman being with divine attributes and qualities, a being that was protected by a range of gods who all became his *comites* and *conservatores*.⁴³³ According to Michel Christol, Gallienus' imperial representation shows an escalation of his military qualities, and – I would like to add – of his divine associations.⁴³⁴ In his own imperial representation on coins, in which he imitated Gallienus, the latter's competitor Postumus 'answered' through emphasizing the gods who were *his* protectors, his *conservatores*.⁴³⁵ Like Septimius Severus, Philippus Arabs, and Decius before him, Gallienus emphasized his local roots, promoting Falerii in Etruria on some of his coins.⁴³⁶ Gallienus has a bad reputation in ancient literature. In *Panegyricus Latinus* 8.10.1–3, for example, we read that under Gallienus the empire was dismembered of almost all its limbs, either through neglect of affairs or through a certain deterioration in Roman fortune. The Persians had too lofty pretensions, the Palmyrenes claimed equality, all of Egypt and the Syrias had seceded, Raetia was lost and Noricum and the Pannonias were devastated. Italy herself, mistress of nations, lamented the destruction of many of its cities.⁴³⁷ Contrary to actual reality, the emperor was depicted as an indolent, irresponsible, and debauched creature.⁴³⁸

The chronology of the remainder of Gallienus' sole reign is open to debate.⁴³⁹ The contours are becoming clear, though. The vicissitudes of the years 260 and 261 must have elicited the Goths and other tribes to get over the Roman borders again. The military camps along the Danube border must have been emptier than ever, after Gallienus had taken detachments from them for his new army and after the costly wars against Ingenuus, Regalianus, the Macriani, and invading barbarians. In 262 a serious attack by Goths and other bands of warriors was the result. They came over land and sea, invading the western parts of Asia Minor as well as the Balkans and Greece. Gothic groups under warlords who by Iordanes are called Respa, Veduco, and Tharvaro invaded Bithynia and the province of Asia.⁴⁴⁰ Maybe during this raid the Goths destroyed Heraclea and the great temple of Diana at Ephesus. They were defeated, but could nonetheless take their booty home.⁴⁴¹ Another band of warriors entered Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece. In an article that was published in 2015, Mallan and Davenport convincingly argue that a recently discovered Dexippus fragment, combined with other scraps of literary evidence, points at an invasion into Greece that happened about 262.⁴⁴² The invading column crossed Macedonia and Thrace and vainly attacked Thessalonica, where the defenders on their ramparts bravely withstood the invaders. Thereupon the attacking warriors, having heard that more to the south a rich booty was awaiting them, gave up the siege and marched into Greece. The Greeks manned the passes of Thermopylae under the command of the governor of Achaea, Marianus, the Athenian Philostratus and the Boiotarch Dexippus. In the *Historia Augusta* this Marianus is wrongly called Marcianus, the *dux* who was involved in the Balkan war of 267–268.⁴⁴³ The Boiotarch Dexippus tried to motivate his makeshift army through an adhortative oration. All in

vain, for the Germanic warriors broke through to Athens and the southern parts of Greece. Many Greeks in the emergency army that manned the Thermopylae passes must have felt some continuity with the distant Greek past.⁴⁴⁴

The emperor Gallienus must have been around, for in 262, just before he returned to Rome to celebrate his *decennalia*, he cruelly smashed a military rebellion at Byzantium (HA *Gallienus* 6.8f.; 7.4). Unfortunately, the *Historia Augusta* is the only source for this event. The author of this work may be right this time, for under Valerian Byzantium had become an important center of Roman defense against Goths and other invaders.⁴⁴⁵ Gallienus may have been known for a certain degree of leniency,⁴⁴⁶ but in 262 at Byzantium he seems to have harshly punished the soldiers there who had mutinied against him, had almost destroyed the city, and probably had let through to Bithynia and Asia Gothic groups of warriors who had come by sea. The emperor may have felt frustrated by yet another rebellion, and because he had been obliged to break off his war against Postumus in order to go to the Aegean part of his realm.

In September 262 Gallienus celebrated his *decennalia* in Rome. In *Caesares* 33.15 Aurelius Victor tells us that Gallienus organized *ludos ac festa triumphorum*, without giving a date or any details. In HA *Gallienus*, 7.4–9.8, there is a more elaborate description of what is called a decennial festival.⁴⁴⁷ The emperor had really earned his triumphal decennial procession. He had survived the crisis of 259–260, had conquered invading enemies and usurpers, had created an effective mobile army, and had found vassals and helpers who assisted him in warding off attackers and looting bands.

In 265 Gallienus attacked Postumus again. This war against Postumus in Gaul was a difficult one, and not successful in the end. Postumus may have owed a great deal to his Germanic auxiliaries. It seems that he had made up losses by hiring lots of them.⁴⁴⁸ There are some remarkable stories, but there is no consistent report. According to the Anonymous Continuator Dionis, *FHG* IV, 194–5 fragment 6, on one occasion Gallienus proposed to Postumus to decide the war by a duel between the two of them, to spare Roman soldiers' lives. On another occasion Gallienus was wounded during the siege of a town in which Postumus had sought refuge, and was consequently obliged to withdraw. On yet another occasion Aureolus defeated Postumus, but did not pursue him with sufficient energy, thus giving Postumus the opportunity to rally his forces.⁴⁴⁹ Another trace of the fighting is a recently found inscription from Gelduba, modern Krefeld, which testifies to the construction of works there after a victory against rebels (pro-Gallienic troops).⁴⁵⁰ Of course the fact that this campaign was not launched until 265 does not mean that there were no skirmishes between 261 and 265 on the border dividing the territories of Gallienus and Postumus.

In between all this fighting Gallienus, who was a philhellene, found time to go to Athens, become an archon there, and have himself initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries, as the emperor Hadrian had done long ago.⁴⁵¹ This may have happened in 264. Probably the emperor also supervised military recovery in the Aegean area from there. When he was in Rome, he and his wife Salonina used to converse with the philosopher Plotinus and some philosophically minded

friends, some of whom were persuaded by Plotinus to abstain from politics and administration, and concentrate on platonic wisdom.⁴⁵² The imperial couple even wished to put at Plotinus' disposal a (deserted?) place in Campania, to found his own Platonopolis there, a community of wise men who had withdrawn from turmoil, but were thwarted in this endeavor by the emperor's military entourage.⁴⁵³

One of the greatest wars Gallienus had to fight during his sole reign was the one in the Balkans and the adjacent parts of Greece and Asia Minor, which came about in 267, and only ended during the reign of the emperor Aurelian (AD 270–275).⁴⁵⁴ Goths, Heruls, and other invading groups entered the empire by land and sea. Penetrating into northwest Asia Minor, warrior bands attacked Cyzicus (HA *Gallienus* 13.8), Nicomedia, and other cities. In the words of Syncellus 467:

At that time, the Scythians who are called Gotthoi in their native tongue, again passed through the Pontic Sea into Bithynia; after traversing the whole of Asia and Lydia, they seized Nikomedeia, a large city of Bithynia, and laid waste the cities of Ionia. Some of the cities that they captured were unwall, others were partially fortified.

He relates that parts of Phrygia, Troy, Cappadocia, and Galatia were attacked as well. Odaenathus arrived to help, but was untimely murdered at Heraclea Pontica (see below). Other plundering groups, having crossed the sea, entered the region of the Lower Danube. They were defeated by two Byzantines, Cleodamus, and Athenaeus, who also fortified many cities (HA *Gallienus* 13.6). This time Byzantium was an effective center of resistance. A plundering group that was progressing by sea was beaten by a *dux* called Venerianus who was killed in this action himself (HA *Gallienus* 13.7).⁴⁵⁵

A band of Heruli seems to have broken through to Greece. The Athenians quickly built a makeshift wall around the Acropolis and a small part of the city north of it.⁴⁵⁶ A proconsul of Achaea, Claudius Illyrius, son of an eponymous Athenian archon, Claudius Teres, and grandson of another proconsul Achaea, wholeheartedly cooperated in organizing Athenian defenses.⁴⁵⁷ Another Dexippus, the Athenian historiographer, fought the Heruli at the head of an emergency militia, trusting that a nearby imperial fleet would come to help him (Dexippus, fragment 25.4 Martin).⁴⁵⁸ The Heruli must subsequently have concentrated on other parts of Greece and on Macedonia.⁴⁵⁹ As they had done in 262, the Greeks resisted. According to David Potter, a Greek militia fought the invaders. He tells us:

In 268 we are told that the cities of Greece assembled an army to repel Gothic invaders from the sea who sacked Athens despite the best efforts of its citizens (who evidently rallied in the countryside and inflicted some sort of reverse on their enemies). The efforts of the larger Greek contingent are reflected in an inscription honoring Epaphrys, a thirty two years old man from Gytheion in Laconia, saying that he together with his comrades fought

in the front rank of the Greeks, repulsed the enemies of the Athenians with ships and infantry, and that he died at sea under the swords of the barbarians. (IG V.1 n.1188)⁴⁶⁰

Other barbarians were roving through 'Illyricum,' probably Moesia Superior and Inferior. Some of them, reputedly 3,000 in numbers, were rounded up by Gallienus in a battle at the river Nessos, or Nestos, near the border of Macedonia.⁴⁶¹ Other bands of invading warriors were subsequently fought in the Balkans by a *dux* Marcianus, who took over when Gallienus had to return to Italy to fight Aureolus at Milan.⁴⁶² Udo Hartmann seems to think that all this fighting was done by the Heruli alone in one systematic campaign.⁴⁶³ The rather chaotic way in which the events are told and placed into ancient geography, however, pleads for a succession of overlapping raids by different warrior groups.⁴⁶⁴ As he had done before about 254 in Pannonia and a few years later in Germania Inferior, Gallienus came to an agreement with one of the opposing chiefs, called Naulobatus, to diminish the forces that he had to fight and strengthen his own. There is a rumor that he even gave this man the *ornamenta consularia*.⁴⁶⁵ The Athenian Dexippus may have been successful in putting up some resistance in Attica, but his victory was short-lived. Under Claudius II barbarians took Athens again. They wanted to burn books there, but came to second thoughts. Allegedly their argument was that people who read books cannot be good, well-trained opponents in war.⁴⁶⁶

In the east from 260 to the year of his death (267 or 268) Odaenathus acted like a kind of viceroy without usurping Gallienus' rights to appoint governors to the various eastern provinces and without usurping imperial power either. The mint of Antioch kept issuing coins of Gallienus.⁴⁶⁷ In 262 and 266 the Palmyrene prince successfully campaigned against the Persians. Both times he seems to have reached Ctesiphon, without being able to take it, in 262 because the Persians mobilized any forces they had at their disposal, from every corner of their empire (HA Gallienus 10.6–8), and in 266 because Odaenathus was invited by the emperor to go to Asia Minor and fight invading warrior groups there.⁴⁶⁸ In 262 Odaenathus recaptured and destroyed Nisibis, because it had become pro-Persian (Zosimus 1.39.1). As Hartmann convincingly argues, Armenia was not recaptured and remained in Persian hands.⁴⁶⁹ After these two campaigns not much was heard from Shapur any more. He died in 270. Odaenathus' successes do not come as a surprise; his army consisted of his excellent Palmyrene cavalry, which was a match to any Persian mounted forces, bowmen from several eastern regions, and Roman infantry, one of the remainders of the eastern army. A deadly combination. Some literary sources indicate that he also recruited country folk from Syria and other eastern regions.⁴⁷⁰ After his second Persian campaign Odaenathus was asked to fight barbarian bands in Pontic Asia Minor, which he successfully did. In this region he met his death, though. The Anonymus Continuator Dionis tells us that Odaenathus and the son who was with him were killed by a Rufinus who wished to forestall too ambitious Palmyrene moves.⁴⁷¹ In the *Historia Augusta* there is a not very trustworthy story that after Odaenathus' death Gallienus sent his praetorian prefect Heraclianus with an army to the east to fight the Persians

and belatedly avenge Valerian, but that this army was eliminated by Palmyrene forces.⁴⁷² This is all highly improbable in a time when continuous warfare and the plague would have depleted the ranks and there were serious invasions going on in the Balkans and adjacent territories. There were just not enough reserves to send another army to the east. Besides there is no evidence other than this short passage in HA Gallienus 13.4f.

In September 268 Gallienus' sole reign came to an end. Having heard of Aureolus usurping the imperial purple or defecting to Postumus, the emperor hastened back to Italy, and defeated Aureolus at Pontirolo (Pons Aureoli) in north Italy. Postumus could not help Aureolus, who was being besieged at Milan, but in the course of the siege some of Gallienus' generals, among whom were his praetorian prefect Heraclianus and two future emperors, Claudius and Aurelian, conspired against the emperor and had him killed, to the dismay of his soldiers who, according to the author of the *Historia Augusta*, regarded Gallienus an *imperator utilis, necessarius, fortis*, and *efficax* (HA Gallienus 15.1).⁴⁷³ Aurelius Victor explains the conspiracy against Gallienus in a peculiar way, telling us that Aureolus had thrown spurious lists of future victims of Gallienus from the walls of Milan, which contained names of *duces* (commanders) and *tribuni* (middle cadre officers) of the Gallienic army. So some men who found their own names on the lists conspired against the emperor to prevent their own demise (*Caesares* 33.20–2).

Military unrest at Milan ended when Claudius II, Gallienus' cavalry commander, was elected emperor. Aureolus' troops defected to the new emperor, and he himself was assassinated by Claudian soldiers.⁴⁷⁴ On a gold medallion Claudius could celebrate the *Concordia exercitus*.⁴⁷⁵ In Rome the senators butchered a number of Gallienus' friends and relatives, among whom were a bureaucrat called *patronus fisci*, Gallienus' youngest son Marinianus, and the emperor's (half-)brother Valerian, but Claudius put an end to these activities and forced the senate to consecrate his predecessor.⁴⁷⁶ According to Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 33.33, the senators hated Gallienus for his behavior and the bad times that the empire witnessed, but also because he, having ousted them from the army, had brought infamy over the senators.⁴⁷⁷ This may be, however, an anachronistic criticism made by a fourth century senator who had seen the eventual consequences of Gallienus' appointment policies.

2.5. Recovery: the years 268–284

In this period – AD 268–284 – the unity of the Roman empire was restored and some important enemies were thoroughly defeated by Claudius and his successors. Not much is known about Claudius' backgrounds and career. He may have been born about 214, somewhere in Dalmatia or Moesia Superior, and he may have had an equestrian military career. In 268 he was the commander of Gallienus' new army.⁴⁷⁸ He was not a senator. Not much is known about his family either. Claudius had a brother, Quintillus, who succeeded him in 270, but reigned briefly.⁴⁷⁹ Later on, in the fourth century AD, Claudius was thought to be the

ancestor of the Constantinian dynasty, which is undoubtedly a legitimizing Constantinian myth.⁴⁸⁰

The turmoil following Gallienus' death gave some Alamannic raiders an opportunity to invade Italy through Raetia, but in the autumn of 268 they were beaten at Lake Garda, either by Claudius or by one of his generals.⁴⁸¹ The great fame of this emperor has always been his victory over the Goths in 269, which ushered in the last phase of the Balkan wars that had started in 249. Goths and other warrior groups seem to have sailed through the Bosphorus, vainly attacked some cities, probably Byzantium and Cyzicus, and split up, as they used to do. Some of them wandered into the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas, got into logistical troubles, and were hit by the plague, and others were decimated by the Roman fleet commander Tenagino Probus. Other groups of warriors went ashore in Thrace. And of course roving bands that had invaded Thrace and the Moesiae earlier and had been plundering there ever since now may have joined in. Many invaders were annihilated by Claudius at Naissus (Niš), where they apparently had been assembling.⁴⁸² Roman cavalry units harassed groups of survivors, some of whom had retreated to Mount Haemus. Others tried to take Anchialus and Nicopolis in Moesia Inferior, but were crushed by the valor of the provincials.⁴⁸³ Again we see local emergency militias do well against barbarian bands. In 270 Claudius died of the plague, which had been raging with ups and downs since 252, and never got back to Rome, where his brother Quintillus was acclaimed to be emperor. His reign was short, probably not more than 17 days. At Sirmium the military acclaimed one of their generals, Lucius Domitius Aurelianus. Quintillus awaited Aurelian and his army at Aquileia, but was killed by his own troops who had no hope to win the battle against Aurelian and his experienced soldiers.⁴⁸⁴ Claudius was honored for his achievements through series of commemorative coins.⁴⁸⁵ Aurelian celebrated, throughout the time of his rule, the *concordia militum*, *concordia legionum*, and *concordia exercitus*.⁴⁸⁶

In the west the *Imperium Galliarum* started to lose its stability. After successfully fighting the Germans and having warded off the emperor Gallienus, Postumus came into conflict with his own soldiery and lost his life, in 269. According to Andreas Luther he celebrated his *decennalia* in the summer of 269, and subsequently discarded a usurper, called Laelianus, who had been either the governor of Germania Superior or the commander of *legio XXII Primigenia* at Mogontiacum (Mainz). Postumus forbade his troops to plunder this city, but was killed by his enraged soldiery.⁴⁸⁷ After Postumus' death one short reign followed the other.⁴⁸⁸ Postumus was succeeded by some Marius, a shadowy figure,⁴⁸⁹ who in his turn after a few days was succeeded by Victorinus, a military man who governed during two years. He issued a series of 'legionary coins' propagating the loyalty of his soldiers, which may be an indication that this loyalty was fairly weak. His 'legionary coins' may, however, just mention *vexillationes* of legions that served under his banners, or proclaim that a majority of the armies in the empire stood by him, for he included names of legions that were serving in the east and in the 'central empire'.⁴⁹⁰ Victorinus

was violently replaced by a senator and former governor of Aquitania, Tetricus, who had to cope with continuous unrest in his own army, and was eventually glad to leave his soldiers and surrender himself to Aurelian, in 274. Apparently he had lost any authority he may have had, probably because financially he had come into dire straits. Aurelian defeated Tetricus' forces on the Catalaunian fields and finished the *imperium Galliarum* in this same year 274. It seems that the battle took many military lives. Tetricus was well treated and appointed *corrector Lucaniae* in southern Italy.⁴⁹¹ The Gallic empire had not developed into a separate or separatist state; even if it had the shape of a second, parallel Roman empire, it had always been the domain of a series of usurpers who were successfully defying the lawful emperor.⁴⁹²

After Postumus' death the Gallic empire may already have lost some important territories. The Iberian Peninsula seems to have gone over to Claudius II, which must have been a deadly blow to the financial position of the Gallic emperors.⁴⁹³ Spain and Portugal still were important mining and tax territories. Augustodunum (Autun) in Gaul rose in rebellion, but could not be saved by Claudius who was busy elsewhere. After a prolonged siege the city was destroyed by Victorinus.⁴⁹⁴ Only much later, under the Tetrarchy, it started to recover when artisans from Britain had been settled there.⁴⁹⁵ Southeastern Gaul seems to have entered Claudius' sphere of influence, which must have been another blow to Gallic imperial finances. Claudius sent his *praefectus vigilum* Placidianus to the southeast of Gaul with *vexillationes atque equites* (ILS 569), a good description of how new mobile armies were composed. He must have been an important man, although not much of his career is known. About 270 he became, after an undoubtedly equestrian career, praetorian prefect and *vir clarissimus* (CIL XII 1551) and, under Aurelian, in 273, he was appointed *consul ordinarius*.⁴⁹⁶

In the first period of his reign, in 270–271, Aurelian had to go into action in Italy.⁴⁹⁷ As in 259–260 and 268–269, Germanic bands of warriors had entered the north of this important region. In one of the extant fragments of his work, fragment 28 Martin, Dexippus describes negotiations going on at the Metaurus, far into Italy, between Aurelian and a band of Iuthungi, Semnonian or rather Elbgermanic raiders who had come through Raetia into Italy, and wanted to forage. The text is highly rhetorical but may refer to historical events. The emperor seems to have managed to drive the invaders off, over the Danube. Aurelian then successfully attacked Vandals who were raiding into Pannonia, clearing them out of this province (Dexippus fragment 30 Martin). Then he had to fight the Iuthungi again, who – together with bands of Alamanni – had reentered Italy. They defeated the emperor near Placentia and went south, setting the population of the city of Rome into a panic, but Aurelian stopped them, heavily defeating them at the Metaurus and at Ticinum in the Po valley, thus freeing Italy from Germanic invasions for the remainder of the third century.⁴⁹⁸ John Drinkwater seems to think that this fighting was considered 'small beer' by Aurelian, but his argument is in my view not very convincing.⁴⁹⁹

There was more to do. Three usurpers, some Septimius in Dalmatia, an Urbanus, and a Domitianus were quickly finished off,⁵⁰⁰ but in the city of Rome serious

problems arose, which demanded the emperor's personal attention. *Monetarii*, led by a *rationalis* Felicissimus, and some senators, being under suspicion of fraudulent behavior in the production of coins at the Roman mint, rose in rebellion, and were cruelly put down and punished. It is not completely clear what the causes and aims of this rebellion were but, according to Aurelius Victor, it cost many thousands of lives, among them 7,000 *bellatores*, probably military.⁵⁰¹ At this time Aurelian also gave the city of Rome a new wall, to ward off future invaders (and usurpers?) who would reach the city.⁵⁰² During the opening years of his reign Aurelian also finished heavy fighting and raiding in the Balkans. He beat the Goths, gave up Roman Dacia, which became an abode for Goths and other tribes, and transported at least part of the Roman population of that province to Moesia Inferior and Thrace, in order to repopulate these territories. The author of the *Historia Augusta*, of all people, sees some connection between these things, saying that Aurelian gave up Dacia and transported much of its Roman population to Moesia, observing that Illyricum was devastated and Moesia was in a ruinous state. This was a wise decision. Moesia and Thrace could now become tax-paying provinces again. They were not completely free from marauding bands, but the great invasions now came to an end.⁵⁰³ That Thrace really needed repopulation was also acknowledged by Diocletian who, according to *Panegyricus Latinus* 8.21.1, filled the deserts of Thrace by the transfer of people from Asia Minor.

In the east, Palmyra had by 272 become a threat instead of an ally. At the end of Gallienus' sole reign there may have been some suspicions among Roman leaders already, and Odaenathus' death may have been caused by a distrustful magistrate, called Rufinus (see above, p. 85). Under Claudius II there was more reason for distrust. Odaenathus' successor Vaballathus, who was guided by his mother Zenobia, Odaenathus' widow, adopted his predecessor's titles (*corrector Orientis, rex regum* and *dux Romanorum*), but until 272 at Antioch kept issuing coins in the name of the emperor Aurelian and himself.⁵⁰⁴ At Palmyra Zenobia created a lively royal court, where intellectuals such as the Greek philosopher Longinus and even the Christian bishop of Antioch, Paulus of Samosata, were welcome.⁵⁰⁵ Her pretensions clearly reached farther than the position of a client queen. Palmyra was becoming a monarchy between Rome and Persia, and was no longer just a caravan city-state under Roman control.⁵⁰⁶

Zenobia and her son gradually expanded their sphere of influence. During the first two years of their rule they strengthened their grip on Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine, and in 270 they added Arabia and Egypt to their sphere of influence. Vaballathus received the title *imperator* in addition to the ones he already had. In Egypt the Palmyrenes had to fight, but they were lucky. The capable governor Tenagino Probus left Egypt to fight and beat some Goths at sea, and thus left his province open to invaders. As a precaution he had increased his forces by recruiting many Egyptians and 'Libyans.'⁵⁰⁷ According to Udo Hartmann, the Palmyrenes needed two campaigns to conquer Egypt. Tenagino Probus, having heard about the first one, apparently returned to join the fighting against the Palmyrene general Timagenes and his forces, and may have expelled them from his province.

In Alexandria, where Palmyra apparently had quite a few supporters, civil strife broke out. Eventually the Palmyrenes won, Probus died at the fortress Babylon (near Cairo), and Egypt came under Palmyrene control.⁵⁰⁸ The Palmyrenes subsequently tried to expand their sphere of influence to Asia Minor.

In 272 the emperor Aurelian, who in 271–272 had spent time at Byzantium, had, at last, after some new fighting in the Balkans, the opportunity to launch a campaign against the growing Palmyrene kingdom. In 1.50–58 Zosimus is giving an unusually detailed report about it. The Palmyrenes saw it coming and stopped issuing coins in Aurelian's name at Antioch. Aurelian took with him the army that had beaten invaders in Italy and the Balkans,⁵⁰⁹ and Palmyra still had at its disposal its own mounted troops, Syrians, and remnants of the former Roman army of the east. After the first lost battle Zenobia boasted that she had not lost her own troops, the victims on her side all being Romans.⁵¹⁰ Of course this is war propaganda, but there may be some truth in it. Her predecessor Odaenathus had inherited sizeable remnants of the eastern Roman army. Having quickly marched through Chalcedon, Nicomedia, Nicaea, and Ancyra, Aurelian encountered resistance at Tyana. After a prolonged siege the city was taken by treason, and was treated by Aurelian with unexpected clemency, to the dismay of many of his soldiers who did not get the opportunity to enrich themselves.⁵¹¹ This episode shows that Aurelian's position was strong enough to defy the wishes of the soldiers. Aurelian subsequently won two battles, one near Antioch and another one at Emesa, and then proceeded to Palmyra itself, which he took in the same year 272, gaining an enormous booty.⁵¹² He must have taken Palmyra quickly, for the city did not have any walls, just some not so impressive defense structures, as archeological research has established.⁵¹³ Longinus and some other supporters of Zenobia were put to death, and Zenobia was taken prisoner, but apart from that Palmyra was treated with clemency.⁵¹⁴ Aurelian may have sent some troops to Egypt, to quell some unrest there. Hartmann rightly argues, however, that there was no usurper called Firmus. Under Gallienus there had been a *praefectus Aegypti* Claudius Firmus (264–265), but he cannot be identified with a usurper Firmus who stood up in Egypt after Palmyra's demise. The author of the *Historia Augusta* must have made him up, and must have made some brigands into usurpers and rebels.⁵¹⁵

Aurelian appointed Aurelius Marcellinus, since the early summer of 272 prefect of Mesopotamia, *rector Orientis*.⁵¹⁶ In 273 he sent an experienced administrator, the consularis Virius Lupus, as his deputy for legal matters to the east (*iudex sacrarum cognitionum per Orientem*), no doubt to solve issues that may have ensued from Palmyra's downfall. One year after Virius Lupus had to go as the emperor's deputy to Egypt, which had also badly suffered.⁵¹⁷ Having returned to the Balkans the emperor defeated some invaders, in 273, but then had to return to the east because Marcellinus reported that at Palmyra a usurper called Antiochus had stood up. Aurelian rapidly marched to the east, took Palmyra without much fighting, and had the city plundered and destroyed. This time there was no clemency.⁵¹⁸

Having returned to the west in 274, Aurelian defeated Tetricus and finished the Gallic empire, as has been told above (p. 88). In 275 he wanted to go to the Gauls again but had to fight invaders in Raetia on his way.⁵¹⁹ He probably took the remainder of Tetricus' troops with him, to get them away from Gaul and thus prevent usurpation, but in this way he weakened the defenses of the Rhine border, with terrible consequences in 275–276, the years of the great invasion of Gaul by Germanic warrior groups.

In 274 Aurelian celebrated his victories in Rome, in a splendid triumphal procession, in which Tetricus and Zenobia had to walk too, to enhance the emperor's glory.⁵²⁰ In the same year Aurelian tried to strengthen the religious foundation of his imperial position by promoting the veneration of the invincible sun god as the most important official cult. The emperor built a great temple for his favorite god, and emphasized his sun god in images and legends on his coins, calling him *Sol Invictus*, *Sol Conservator Augusti*, and *Sol dominus imperii Romani*,⁵²¹ the latter legend being the most outspoken piece of solar representation of this emperor.⁵²² In Anonymus Continuator Dionis FHG IV, 197 fragment 10.6 Aurelian explicitly tells some soldiers that not they, but God, determines who will reign and how long. This is another sign that he was moving to a more religious foundation of imperial power. In imperial titulature in inscriptions Aurelian was glorified in a more traditional way.⁵²³ His victories were celebrated, and he was called *victoriosissimus*, *indulgentissimus*, and *gloriosissimus*. He also received traditional victory surnames, such as *Arabicus Maximus*, *Persicus Maximus* (for what victory?), and *Palmyrenicus Maximus*. In CIL VI 1112 (AD 274) the emperor is called *restitutor orbis, fortissimus et victoriosissimus princeps*,⁵²⁴ and not undeservedly, for he had reunited the empire and prevented that it fell apart.

Aurelian's reign came to an end in September or October 275, through a conspiracy among some of his freedmen and other administrators who felt threatened by the emperor's severity. He was murdered at Caenophrurium in the neighborhood of Byzantium.⁵²⁵ He was probably out to fight the Goths, either in Dacia or in northern Asia Minor. Apparently the armies in the various frontier regions were taken by surprise and had no candidates of their own. So the senate stepped into the vacuum of power and chose Tacitus, probably a senator or a knight with a military past. He seems to have ruled from the autumn of 275 till the summer of 276. There was no substantial interregnum between the reigns of Aurelian and Tacitus, nor was there any 'rule' of Aurelian's widow Severina.⁵²⁶ Tacitus soon had to withstand invasions into northern Asia Minor, where after some successes he was murdered. He was succeeded by his praetorian prefect Florianus, probably a relative, who was accepted by all armies and provinces except the eastern ones, who opted for Probus instead. Florianus seems to have ruled about 88 days in the summer of 276 (July to September). He continued Tacitus' war in Asia Minor without achieving a definite victory, and then went east to fight Probus, but many of his men, coming from the west, fell ill when the weather got very hot (Zosimus 1.64.1–4), and so Probus' army, which had been smaller than Florian's before, now became superior in numbers.⁵²⁷ Florianus was consequently killed at Tarsus by his own men who

no longer trusted their chances. Probus was eventually accepted by all armies and provinces, and of course by the senate in Rome.⁵²⁸ He severely punished the men who had conspired against Aurelian and Tacitus.⁵²⁹ The new emperor had to make a long journey to the west, to fight the Germans. To safeguard the continuity of legal business he appointed a patrician senator, Lucius Caesonius Ovinius Manlius Rufinianus Bassus, deputy for legal matters in Rome and the province of Africa. Bassus' father had served the emperor Gordian in a similar position in 242–244.⁵³⁰

In 275–276 Germanic bands of warriors, profiting by the weakening of western frontier defenses after Tetricus' defeat, had come over the Rhine in greater numbers than before, and had thoroughly plundered all Gallic provinces. According to Kreucher, hasty fortifications indicate widespread turmoil. Probus was quite successful in fighting them. In 277–278 he freed the Gauls from Franks and Alamanni.⁵³¹ In 277 and 280 he also made peace with a Berber tribe, the Baquates, in North Africa.⁵³² After some fighting in 'Illyricum' and Thracia in 278–279, only attested by the author of the *Historia Augusta*,⁵³³ Probus went to Rome, where he may have celebrated a triumph over his enemies, especially the Germans and the Blemmyes.⁵³⁴ Probus left the suppressing of brigands or rebels in Isauria to the local *praeses*, Terentius Marcianus. This was quite an affair. The Romans had to besiege the rebels in their stronghold Cremna, which took much time and effort. Brigandage on such a scale is not a good sign; it indicates widespread misery resulting in despair and violence.⁵³⁵ Brigandage of such magnitude may escalate to outright war, whereas wars may peter out to forms of banditry.⁵³⁶ About 279 in Egypt the Blemmyes had to be stopped again; they seem to have made common cause with rebels in Koptos and Ptolemaïs in the Thebaïs. Probus left this fight to subordinate commanders who defeated both rebels and Blemmyes.⁵³⁷ In 281 Probus was in Rome, where he celebrated a triumph, and then planned another Persian campaign. He went east in 282, but came no further than Sirmium, where he was killed by his own soldiers.⁵³⁸

In some literary sources Probus is described as a prince of peace, a ruler who brought back stability and prosperity. One sensible thing he did was to settle veterans and conquered enemies in regions that needed repopulation. Isauria received veterans (HA *Probus* 16.6), Thrace received Bastarnae (HA *Probus* 18.1; Zosimus 1.71.1) and Franks (Zosimus 1.71.2), and Germanic people were settled in Gaul (HA *Probus* 15.6) and Britain (Zosimus 1.68.3). Some of the Franks rebelled soon and made a raid to Greece, Africa, and Sicily, where they harassed Syracuse (Zosimus 1.71.2).⁵³⁹ In 9.17.2 Eutropius tells us that Probus fostered the cultivation of grapes in Gaul, Pannonia, and Moesia, undoubtedly an apocryphal story because viticulture had been widespread in those regions for quite a while. In *Probus* 20.3–6 the author of the *Historia Augusta* suggests that Probus, having defeated all enemies, had the idea that the empire soon would have no need of soldiers any more, which contributed to his death by military violence. In actual reality Probus' rule cannot have been so splendid. There are strong rumors in our sources about usurpations against Probus but not much about them is known. Several usurpers are mentioned, such as Saturninus from Gaul,

one of Probus' trusted friends, in Syria; Victorinus, a Mauretanian, in Britain; Proculus from Liguria and the Spaniard Bonosus in Gaul. They were either murdered by their own men who did not trust their chances (Saturninus), or eliminated through tricks and ruses by Probus (Victorinus, Proculus), or put down by the emperor (Bonosus).⁵⁴⁰ In 282 a more serious coup occurred, by Carus from Narbonese Gaul. He was Probus' praetorian prefect, an able administrator who had made an equestrian career.⁵⁴¹ Probus sent an army out against him from Sirmium, where he was at that moment, but his soldiers went over to Carus, and Probus was consequently killed by his own men at Sirmium after the news about this desertion had arrived there about September 282.⁵⁴² Carus was accepted by the armies, but did not try to receive any authorisation by the senate at Rome. Carus – and perhaps Probus – were the first emperors to leave this out, thus making the armed forces formally the institution that elected the *princeps*.⁵⁴³

Carus had two sons, Carinus (born about 250) and Numerianus (born about 253), with whom he shared his power.⁵⁴⁴ After a brief war against Sarmatian raiders, of which not much is known,⁵⁴⁵ Carus, Numerianus, and the praetorian prefect Aper, the emperor's brother-in-law, put themselves at the head of the army that Probus had assembled, and went east to attack the Persian king, leaving Carinus behind to maintain order at the Rhine and Danube frontiers and in Britain. Carus' campaign was incredibly successful. He marched quickly to the southeast along the river Euphrates, and took Seleucia and Ctesiphon, but in July 283 he suddenly died, reputedly by a flash of lightning. Altmeyer thinks that he indeed died of natural causes.⁵⁴⁶ Carus was succeeded by his sons, one of whom, Numerianus, led his army back to the west. There, near Chalcedon, he died, probably of natural causes.⁵⁴⁷ In March 284 Numerianus and his army had come back to Antioch (*CJ* 5.52.2). After some time, they decided to march westwards. Numerianus died in Asia Minor, and his army, having arrived at Nicomedia, elected a new prince instead of Carinus, Gaius Valerius Diocles, the later emperor Diocletian (AD 284–305).⁵⁴⁸

According to most literary sources, Carinus behaved as a typical tyrant, which may be a myth. Carinus defeated some Germanic warrior bands in Gaul, eliminated the usurper Marcus Aurelius Sabinus Iulianus, who had been his praetorian prefect, by defeating him at Verona in the opening months of 285, and in August or September 285 even defeated Diocles in Pannonia, near Viminacium. Diocles had bought or influenced Carinus' middle cadre, however, and his opponent was consequently murdered by his own men.⁵⁴⁹ Diocles became the emperor Diocletian and was generally accepted. This was the end of the period of military recovery that had set in under Claudius II, and the beginning of a phase of reform under Diocletian and his colleagues.

2.6. Conclusions

The years 249–268 presented a period of serious military, political, economic, monetary, and demographic crisis. From the beginning of the Principate there had never

been so many great Roman defeats, military losses, usurpations, and devastating enemy raids into the empire resulting in widespread plunder and deportation. Never before had imperial silver money been so debased. Until 253 most wars had not yet coincided, but from 253 simultaneous fighting at several frontiers became a common feature of Roman history, which forced the emperors and their armies to march from one frontier to another. Between 260 and 272/274 the empire was virtually split up into three parts. Yet the empire did not collapse, thanks to a series of able emperors, officers, and administrators who brought about a military recovery, but equally owing to the loyalty of provincial populations, which did not meekly accept the barbarian scourge but fought back together with the imperial forces. After 268 a period of military recovery set in, and the unity of the empire was restored. More than a century later the author Synesius still admired the soldier-emperors who – marching with their armies – conquered the enemies and saved the empire, more so than the palace-emperors of his own days.⁵⁵⁰

What was the impact of the many wars that the empire had to sustain? First of all, particularly the most dangerous wars demonstrated that Roman military superiority was gone. Important reforms were needed to get it back. Military reforms were executed by the emperor Gallienus, which enabled him and his successors to maintain themselves and beat the enemies. Nevertheless it was becoming clear that eternal imperial victory was becoming a myth, which undermined imperial ideology and military loyalty. Emperors who lost battles were regularly facing usurpers. Ensuing civil strife took many lives, military as well as civilian, and filtered down to rivalry and violence between local entities, as it had done in Asia Minor and Greece in AD 193.⁵⁵¹ Quickly changing loyalties to succeeding dynasties eroded imperial authority. Sometimes groups of soldiers refused to accept such changes.⁵⁵²

Lost battles, civil wars, and raids that even reached into the empire's interior, resulted in losses of capital and experienced military personnel, which could hardly be compensated by recruiting new soldiers because one experienced man was equivalent to quite a few new recruits. Besides it is uncertain whether Roman emperors and generals during the 250s and 260s were successful in raising sufficient troops. Roman military camps must have been fairly empty after the terrible 250s, which provided Gallienus with another reason to create a mobile army that could quickly march from one threatened spot to another. The effects of the many wars were from 252 onwards worsened by recurring epidemics or a pandemic that took many lives, especially among mobile young men, such as soldiers.

There were territorial losses. Trajan's province of Dacia was beyond repair already under Gallienus and was given up in 271, and the Agri Decumates, in the angle between the Rhine and Danube in the southwest of modern Germany, had actually been given up after 254. Other regions were heavily devastated. The Moesia and Thrace were continuously ravaged by raids, wars and robbery from 238 onwards, and even more so from 249. This part of the empire entered a more peaceful period after about 271, although emperors repeatedly

had to fight invaders there even after. The other parts of 'Illyricum' as well as Noricum and Raetia suffered less, but were repeatedly harassed by passing warrior bands, Roman armies on the march, and warfare between emperors and pretenders. The Rhinelands and Gaul had been under continuous attack from about 256 onwards, which culminated about 275–276, after Aurelian had destroyed the defense system of the Gallic empire. This part of the empire was after Postumus' death also hit by civil strife. Autun was destroyed in 269 and, about the same time, the authority of the Gallic emperors seems to have collapsed in the Iberian Peninsula and in the southeast of Gaul. These regions seem to have reverted to the 'central empire,' but probably not without strife and chaos. Italy, especially the Po valley, was invaded several times, but was not beset by continuously roving bands who stayed in the region, as were parts of the Balkans. From Valerian's rule to the reign of Probus Roman North Africa had to cope with unrest among Berber tribes, and in the same period Egypt was suffering from inroads by Nubian warriors (the Blemmyes), civil wars, brigandage, and Palmyrene attacks. The northern and northwestern parts of Asia Minor had repeatedly been plundered by Goths and other warriors from about 255 to the reigns of Tacitus, Florianus, and Probus, and so had Greece. Some parts of Asia Minor, such as Isauria, had to cope with widespread brigandage. In the Pontic parts of Asia Minor the situation must have been as bad as in Thrace and Moesia Inferior. Barbarian warrior bands must almost have lived there. Eastern parts of Asia Minor were in 252–254 and in 260 invaded by the Persians, and so were Syria and Roman Mesopotamia. These eastern provinces and their hinterlands had to bear the logistical burden of the large armies that were needed to withstand the Persians, and were also hit by civil wars, the Palmyrene expansion, and Aurelian's war against Zenobia, but they were not continuously harassed by roving bands that simply did not go away.

Notes

- 1 On young mobile men as first plague victims see Cohn 2002, 16–18, 121–2. Cf. Duncan-Jones 1996, 112. According to Lee 2007, 78 defeats and epidemics eliminated many experienced soldiers, whose places had to be taken by inexperienced recruits. In an article published in 2012 Werner Eck demonstrates that such pandemics afflicted military men more than anyone else (Eck in Lo Cascio 2012, 63–77, esp. 64). He uses, among others, a *laterculus* of the Seventh legion Claudia, which indicates that in 168–169, in years when the plague was raging vehemently, exceptionally many recruits were enlisted in this legion. The reason must be that many officers and soldiers, up to 15–20 per cent, had died of the plague. In the same volume Christopher Jones points at HA *Marcus Antoninus* 17.2, where a fierce pestilence is mentioned, and 21.6–7, where the author tells us: 'While the pestilence was still pressing he [Marcus Aurelius] both restored the worship of the gods most scrupulously and recruited slaves for the war, as had been done in the Punic War, and called them volunteers. He even armed gladiators, whom he called the obedient [*obsequentes*]. He also made soldiers out of the bandits of Dalmatia and Dardania. In addition he armed the rural police [*armavit et diogmitas*], and even hired German auxiliaries against the Germans.' See Jones, C.P., in Lo Cascio 2012, 79. An inscription from Thespieae proves that there was indeed local recruitment there. See *ibidem*, 80–5.

- 2 On the so-called Antonine plague and its consequences see Bagnall and Frier 1994, 173f. (10 per cent loss); Duncan-Jones 1996, 108–36, and the volume edited by Elio Lo Cascio in 2012, which contains studies by – among others – Isabella Andorlini and Alfredina Storch Marino on the sources of our knowledge of the Antonine plague, and by Werner Eck on the effects of this plague on the armed forces. See also Bruun in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 201–17 and in Lo Cascio 2012, 123–65, who is fairly skeptical about the available evidence. On the effects of this pandemic in Egypt, the province where most of the evidence comes from, see Kambitsis 1985, 17–30; Rathbone 1991, 174 (a human loss of 20 per cent); Van Minnen 2001, 175–7, and Scheidel 2002, 97–114 (whose numbers are, however, rightfully criticized by Bagnall 2002, 114–20, esp. 120). There may be some evidence in Britain too. At Gloucester some years ago a mass grave was found dating back to the 2nd or 3rd century AD (www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1915073/Mass-Roman-grave-discovered-in-Gloucester, 25 March 2009).
- 3 On Commodus' death see Cassius Dio 73.22.1–6; Herodian 1.16–17. See Hekster 2002, 79ff. On Pertinax and his policies see Birley 1999, 89–95; Potter 2004, 93–6; Christol 2006a, 11f.; Schöpe in Faust and Leitmer 2011, 253–69. His pretension was that he had freed the Roman citizens (*i.e.* from Commodus' tyranny). See RIC IV 1, nr. 6.
- 4 See Cassius Dio 71.22.1 (displeasure among senators because of his obscure origins).
- 5 On Pertinax' career see PIR² H 73; Pflaum 1960, I, 451–4, nr. 179; Alföldy 1974b, 199–215 (idem 1987, 326–48, with addenda); Devijver 1976, 418–20, H 9 (Pertinax); Leunissen 1989, 114f., 213, 262, 307; Kienast 2004, 152. In 2.1.4 Herodian tells us that Pertinax was an Italian who had served with distinction in many military and civil posts and won many victories against the Germans and eastern enemies.
- 6 See Herodian 2.5–6; HA Pertinax 10–12; Zosimus 1.7.2. Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 17.10 calls Pertinax *immodice parvus*.
- 7 Cf. Cassius Dio 74.8.1. On Herodian's dislike of greedy and violent soldiers see De Blois 1998, 3421f.; idem 2003, 153f.
- 8 Cassius Dio 74.11.3; Herodian 2.6.4–11. On the accession of Didius Iulianus see Icks in Chaniotis 2011, 357–62.
- 9 On Iulianus and his career see PIR² D 77; Birley 1999, 95f.; Kienast 2004, 154.
- 10 RIC IV 1, 15 nr. 3 (cf. 17, nrs 16f.).
- 11 Cassius Dio 74.14.3–15.2; Herodian 2.8.1–10.1; 2.15.1–5; HA *Severus* 5–7. See Birley 1999, 97f.; Potter 2004, 99–101; Christol 2006a, 13. In 194 Severus and Albinus were consuls of the year; see Kienast 2004, 157. This was known in the east, in Niger's sphere of action, as well. See Millar 1993, 115 who refers to a dedication for the safety and victory of the emperor Septimius Severus at Dura, that was put up in the year of the consuls Severus and Albinus, 194 AD. This dedication may have been set up after Niger had been defeated. In 2.15.5 Herodian tells us that Severus gave permission for coins of Albinus to be struck, and that he gave recognition to the favor that had been conferred to Albinus by the erection of statues and other honors. On the striking differences between Niger and Severus see Icks in Börm *et al.* 2016, 311–15. Niger courted the masses and tried to win popularity through providing games and spectacles. According to Cassius Dio 74.13.5 and Herodian 2.7.3 the crowd at the games in Rome shouted his name, inviting him to liberate Rome.
- 12 RIC IV 1, 92f., nrs. 2–17 (*denarii*). The legions that were mentioned on those coins were legions serving at the Rhine and Danube frontiers.
- 13 On Severus' velocity and efficacy see Cassius Dio 74.16.5; Herodian 2.9.2; 2.11.1; 2.12.1. On his march through Italy to Rome see Cassius Dio 74.15.2; Herodian 2.11.1–3 and 12.1–2. See Birley 1999, 99–102. On the date of Iulianus' death (2 June 193) see Kienast 2004, 154.

- 14 See Hekster in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 100.
- 15 Busch in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 341.
- 16 See RIC IV 1, 94, nrs. 24 a (gold) and b (silver), AD 193–194. The obverse carries the legend Divus Pertinax Pius Pater, and the reverse the legend Consecratio.
- 17 Birley 1999, 102 and 104. On the life, backgrounds, and career of Lucius Septimius Severus see PIR¹ S 346; Birley 1999, 1–88 and Campbell in CAH XII² 2005, 2–4. On his usurpation, wars, and reign see Birley 1999, 97–200; Potter 2004, 98–124; Campbell in CAH XII² 2005, 2–15; Christol 2006a, 12–39. The main dates of Severus' reign are given by Kienast 2004, 156–9. According to Matthias Haake, Severus tried to show that there was *consensus* between senate, emperor, army, and the populace of Rome, from which only the 'old' praetorian guard was excluded. See Haake in Börm *et al.* 2016, 256f. In my view, this is too optimistic, and incompatible with the strongly military character of Severus' taking over power in Rome.
- 18 Severus' staff of reliable friends and generals was analyzed by Mennen 2011, 194–209 and by Schöpe 2014, 94–108. Among them were Plautianus (up to 205, Schöpe 2014, 100–8), Fabius Cilo (PIR² F 27), Iulius Avitus Alexianus (PIR² I 192), Iulius Laetus (PIR² I 373), Iulius Septimius Castinus (PIR² I 566), Marius Maximus (PIR² M 308), Severus' brother Geta (PIR² S 453), Valerius Valerianus (Mennen 2011, 195 n.5), Claudius Candidus (PIR² C 823), Cornelius Anullinus (PIR² C 1322), Hedi Rufus Lollianus Gentianus (PIR² H 42), a *dux exercitus* (?) called Probus (Mennen 2011, 199), another *dux exercitus* called Sextius Magius Lateranus (PIR² S 666), Virius Lupus (PIR² V 479), a man called Postumianus (PIR² I 751f.; Birley 2005, 192ff.), and at the end of the reign maybe Oclatinus Adventus (PIR² O 9). Quite a few of them will be mentioned again. She could have added the jurists Papinian and Ulpian, and M. Rossius Vitulus from Bulla Regia, an officer from the times of Marcus Aurelius who served Severus as a *procurator arcae expeditionalis* in the campaign against Niger and as a *procurator annonae ob expeditionem felicissimam Gallicam* during the war against Albinus. See AE 1911, 7 = ILS 9015; Pflaum 1960, 593–601, nr. 224; Devijver 1976, 706f. Mennen mentions him briefly on p. 146. She could have added as well Cn. Marcus Rustius Rufinus, an *eques* and local proprietor at Beneventum who had gone into the army as a centurion, in the east, with the Fifteenth Legion Apollinaris. See Dobson 1978, 269f., nr. 154, referring to CIL IX 1582 = ILS 1343 (Beneventum), CIL X 1127 (Abellinum), and CIL XIV 4389 (Ostia). He became a centurion with the praetorian guard in Rome, *primus pilus* (legion III Gallica), *tribunus cohortis VI vigilum* (AD 190, CIL XIV 4378), military tribune with the *cohors XI urbanorum* and the first cohort of the praetorians, *primus pilus* II (legion III Cyrenaica at Bostra), *dilectator* (recruiting officer) in north Italy (Transpadana) to recruit soldiers for the campaign against Albinus, *procurator Augusti* in the new province of Syria Coele, prefect of both imperial fleets, at Misenum and Ravenna, *praepositus annonae*, to organize the logistics of Severus' second Parthian expedition, prefect of the *vigiles*, and praetorian prefect. She could also have added an Anonymus who probably may be identified as Q. Marcus Dioga from Lepcis Magna, Severus' home town. See Christol 1991, 165–88. He was military tribune in Cappadocia before 192, and then became prefect of the fleet of Pannonia (192–194), *procurator ab alimentis* at Rome (195–197), and the man of trust who from 197–199 carried into effect a new census of Gaul (after Albinus' demise). About 200–202 he was *procurator ad dioecesis* at Alexandria, Egypt, and then he became *procurator patrimonii* at Rome (c. 203–205), *ab epistulis* and a *libellis* (205–211?), a *rationibus*, and *praefectus annonae* (212–213). On jurists in Severus' entourage see De Blois 2001b, 138f.
- 19 For example Aquilius Felix, Vibius Marianus, and Cerellius Apollinaris. It seems that in 193 Aquilius Felix had been sent out by Didius Iulianus to kill Severus, but

- he went over to the Severan camp (HA, Didius Iulianus 5.8; Niger 2.6; Sev 5.8, cf Dio 74.17.1). He became one of Severus' henchmen and made a good equestrian career. See Pflaum 1960, II, 598–601, nr. 225, referring to CIL X 6657 = ILS 1387 and AE 1945, 80; Dobson 1978, 277–9, nr. 166. The other two were former centurions who quickly became *primi pili*, fulfilled *militiae* in Rome, and subsequently made successful equestrian careers. Their daughters became *clarissimae*, women belonging to the senatorial order, as did Apollinaris' wife. See Dobson 1978, 283, nrs 173f.
- 20 Dismissal of the praetorians: Cassius Dio 75.1.1f.; Herodian 2.13.2–9; HA *Severus* 6.11. See Bingham 2013, 45. A donative of 2,500 *denarii* to his other soldiers is mentioned by Birley 1999, 104, but this number may be exaggerated. See Whittaker 1969–1970, 239, note 3 who suggests that Severus just managed to pay 250 p.p., although the soldiers demanded tenfold.
- 21 Eck 2012a, 321–36. In this article he cites a large number of *diplomata militaria*, which had been issued from 202 onwards. Sánchez 2001, 245–50, esp. 249 observes that relatively many *diplomata militaria* were distributed to praetorians under Severus Alexander, probably after a term of service that had started under Septimius Severus. See also Speidel, M.A., in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 59. Many of these praetorians may at *honesta missio* have gone back to their home regions, and would have profited by military diploma's to prove their status, which could explain the rising number of *diplomata militaria* distributed to praetorians in the third century.
- 22 Cassius Dio 75.2.5–6.
- 23 Cosme in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 101. In his view this legion was recruited originally in Italy, but enlisted more recruits from the Balkans later on.
- 24 See Ezov 2007, 66. According to Brian Dobson, the third century witnessed a steep decline in the numbers of Italian *primi pili*. See Dobson 1978, 38f. Severus may have started to recruit them from his new praetorian guard and from border armies.
- 25 See Bingham 2013, 47.
- 26 See Herodian 7.11–12.
- 27 On the strategic role, siege, and fate of Byzantium in this war see Cassius Dio 75.10–14; Herodian 3.1.5–7.
- 28 Herodian 3.1.2–3; 3.2.2; 3.4.1.
- 29 HA *Severus* 9.9. Maybe Osrhoeni too. See Ross 2001, 46ff.
- 30 Cassius Dio 75.6.1–8.1; Herodian 3.1–4; HA *Severus* 8.12–9.2.
- 31 Herodian 3.4.8f.
- 32 Kienast 2004, 156.
- 33 See Millar 1993, 121 and Birley 1999, 114.
- 34 RIC IV 1, 97–9, nrs. 55 (gold) and 62, 63a, 64, and 76 (silver *denarii*), AD 194–195. See Cassius Dio 75.1–3. In 75.3.3 he criticizes the establishment of the new province because it became a source of constant wars and great expense. See also HA *Severus* 9.9–11. In 9.11 the author of the HA says that Severus declined the honorary title *Parthicus Maximus*, not to provoke the Parthians, which is in contradiction with the numismatic evidence. On the province of Mesopotamia see Ross 2001, 47–57, and Speidel, M.A. 2007, 405–13. The first governor of the province of Mesopotamia was the *eques* Subatianus Aquila who in AE 1979, 625 presents himself as *praefectus Mesopotamiae primus*. After 11 years in this office he became *praefectus Aegypti* (AD 206, see P. Oxy.1100). Speidel, M.A. 2007, 416 points at Iulius Pacatianus who became *procurator provinciae Osrhoenae* in 195, and subsequently *praefectus legionis Parthicae*. He must have done well, because afterwards he became *procurator Alpium Cottiarum*, *adlectus inter comites Augustorum nostrorum*, and *procurator pro legato provinciae Mauretaniae Tingitanae* (CIL XII 1856 = ILS 1353 = AE 1960, 247).
- 35 See Kemezis 2014, 65; Hekster 2015, 210–13. RIC IV 1, 99, nr. 72a carries the legend M. Commodus Antoninus Augustus on the obverse, and Consecratio on the reverse. On Severus' supposed fraternal link with Commodus see CIL VI 1025 (p 3071, 3777,

- 4317) = ILS 404, Rome: *Divo Commodo / fratri / Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) L(uci) Septimi / Severi Pii / Pertinacis Aug(usti) / praepositus Crescens / scribae Fortunatianus / Felicianus Quintio / Eutyches Philumenus*.
- 36 See Cassius Dio 75.4.1. On this change of dynastic policy see Birley 1999, 117; Hekster 2002, 189–91; Kienast 2004, 156; Christol 2006a, 15. There are traces of this change in Severus' coinage; see Lichtenberger 2011, 48f. See RIC IV 1, 130, 312 (*aureus*), which shows Severus and Iulia Domna on the obverse, with the legend *Felicitas Publica*, and Geta and Caracalla on the reverse, with the legend *Perpetua Concordia*. On Faustina and the title *mater castrorum* see Speidel, M.A. 2012, 127–52. On Iulia's titles see RIC IV 1, 208ff., nrs. 858 and 879 (*mater augustorum*), and nrs. 860, 880, and 883 (*mater castrorum*). See Langford 2013, 14–112.
- 37 See Christol 2006a, 17–19; Lichtenberger 2011, 339–78. On Iulia Domna, who soon became very influential, see PIR² I 663; Birley 1999, 76; Levick 2007, 6–22 (personal backgrounds) and 57–85. She became important in Severan representation, see Lichtenberger 2011, 335–78.
- 38 Cassius Dio 75.14.3; Herodian 3.6.9; cf. HA *Severus* 9.4: Severus may have had some personal resentment against the Antiochenes as well, because they once laughed at him.
- 39 Birley 1999, 123.
- 40 On this war see Cassius Dio 75.4–7; Herodian 3.4–7; HA *Severus* 10–11. See Birley 1999, 121–5; Potter 2004, 110–12.
- 41 ILS 1140 = CIL II 4114. See Birley 1999, 125.
- 42 See Birley 2005, 183ff.
- 43 See Birley 2005, 333–6; idem in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 365.
- 44 Alföldy 2000, 7–53.
- 45 See AE 1957, 123: During Septimius Severus' second Parthian campaign Claudius Gallus, a trusted senator, was *praepos[it]us vexillationum / [leg(ionum)] IIII Germanicar(um)*. Later on, when Septimius Severus shared the emperorship with both his sons, the four Rhine legions again had to provide detachments. See CIL III 10471 = AE 1890, 82 = AE 1972, 378 (AD 193–207): Gaius Julius Septimius Castinus as a *dux vexillationum IIII Germanicarum adversus defectores et rebelles, ex praecepto dom. nnn.* (on the command of his three *domini*). At the end of Severus' reign he was *legatus Augustorum pro praetore Pannoniae Inferioris*.
- 46 See Dobson 1978, 102 and 269f., nr. 154, referring to CIL IX 1582 = ILS 1343 (Ben-eventum), CIL X 1127 (Abellinum), and CIL XIV 4389 (Ostia). His function as a *dilectator* is mentioned in CIL X 1127.
- 47 In 75.7.1, speaking about the decisive battle between Severus and Albinus, Cassius Dio remarks that Severus had won all right but that Roman power had suffered a severe blow, in as much as countless numbers had fallen on both sides, and that many even of the victors deplored the disaster. This could be a commonplace remark but Dio was a contemporary and stood not far from the Severan court.
- 48 On the effects of the Antonine plague see above, p. 38 and 96n2. According to Scheidel 2002, 104, prices of commodities in Egypt may have doubled in the last quarter of the second century AD. On the three *legiones Parthicae* see Smith 1972, 485–7; Carrié and Rousselle 1999, 76f.; Speidel, M.A. 2007, 411–15. They may have been raised before 197. The *legiones Parthicae* I and III stayed in the new province of Mesopotamia, whereas *legio II Parthica* became part of the army of Italy, as a reinforcement of Italy's garrison and a kind of central reserve to the emperor. Severus' army of Italy now consisted of the *vigiles*, the urban cohorts, the fleets of Misenum and Ravenna, the *legio II Parthica*, and the praetorian guard. See Bruun 1995, 11f.; Carrié and Rousselle 1999, 75f.; Lee 2007, 10; Mennen 2011, 166.
- 49 See Eck in Onken and Rohde 2011, 63–77. His main evidence are the texts of *diplomata militaria*, one of which was only recently found. Those texts maintain the usual

- formulae about female consorts, also after 197, the year of the so-called abolition of the marriage ban.
- 50 On the doubling of the soldiers' pay see Speidel, M.A. 2009, 367, 371 (table 4), and 380 (table 7). In 3.8.4–5 Herodian says: 'the soldiers too were given a very substantial sum of money and with this many other privileges that they had not had before, such as an increase in pay (which Severus was the first to give), permission to wear a gold ring and the right to live at home with their wives.' On the ending of the marriage ban for soldiers see Phang 2001, 17–19, 336, and 382. She thinks that it was directly meant to encourage recruitment. On p. 382 she rightly remarks: 'Severus' military reforms were not merely to indulge the army; he probably sought to increase recruitment after the Marcomannic War, the Antonine plague, and the civil wars of 193–7 had decimated the army.' On Severus' military reforms see also Le Bohec 1994, 193.
 - 51 On military expenditure as 72 to 77 per cent of the emperor's budget see Duncan-Jones 1994, 45. Potter in Dijkstra *et al.*, eds. 2015, 31 note 15 criticizes Duncan-Jones' data and calculations, but does not mention much lower percentages himself. See above, p. 29, n65.
 - 52 See below, p. 159–61, with notes.
 - 53 See Mócsy 1974, 236; Alföldy 1987, 35.
 - 54 Speidel, M.A. 2009, 380, table 7.
 - 55 Busch in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 336–41.
 - 56 I follow Mitthof 2001, esp. 78–81. See also Van Berchem 1937; Callu 1975, 608; Roth 1999, 240f. with notes 132–140; Carlà 2007, 89–93; Cosme 2009, 222–5; Hebblewhite 2017, 90–3. According to Remesal Rodríguez in De Blois 2002, 77–89, esp. 89, the *praefectus annonae* was responsible for this system but his argument is not convincing. Eich 2005, 209f. shows that the *praefectus annonae* was first and foremost responsible for the corn supply of Rome, not for military logistics. See also Lo Cascio in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 204. Carlà 2007, 82–110, explains that this *annona* under Septimius Severus and Severus Alexander developed to a structural tax, in the raising of which were involved *curiales*, *actuarii*, *optiones*, *centurions*, and *primipilares*. In his view military personnel was strongly involved in raising this tax in kind. On p. 109 he speaks of a 'vera e propria militarizzazione nell'annona militare,' which may well be exaggerated.
 - 57 See Speidel, M.A., in Kolb 2014, 80–99.
 - 58 HA *Severus* 13.1–9 gives a long list of names. According to this author Severus had killed 41. See Christol 2006a, 23 note 10.
 - 59 Dobson 1978, 278. In his view, the *castra peregrina*, the camp of the *frumentarii*, was of great consequence under Severus. See Dobson 1978, 39.
 - 60 See Dobson 1978, 281f.
 - 61 Cassius Dio 75.8.4f. See Okon 2012, 44–62 ('repressed senators'). Other waves of terror followed the death of Plautianus: Dio 76.5.3–5 and 76.7–9. See also Herodian 3.8.6–8; HA *Severus* 12–15 *passim*.
 - 62 Birley 1999, 128. On the effects of terror and confiscation in Spain see Remesal Rodríguez 1986, 104–8 (esp. focussing on olive oil producing areas in Baetica); Richardson 1998, 238f.; Haley 2003, 71, 183ff. François Jacques takes for granted an ensuing concentration of landed property in the Iberian Peninsula. See Jacques 1990, 895.
 - 63 Potter 1990, 8; Duncan-Jones 1994, 5f. Such functionaries are mentioned in CIL XI 6337 = ILS 1422 (Ti. Claudius Zeno Ulpianus); CIL VI 1634 = ILS 1423 (Q. Valerius Postimius Romulus). See also Pflaum 1960, II, 645–6, nr. 240 (Lollianus).
 - 64 Pflaum 1960, II, 590–2, nr. 222, Ti. Claudius Xenophon, referring to CIL III 7127 = ILS 1421. He is not identical with the Claudius Xenophon who was governor of Lower Britain in 223. See Birley 2005, 346.
 - 65 On Fabius Cilo see PIR² F 27; Le Roux in Navarro Caballero and Demougin 2001, 47; Mennen 2011, 166, 172, 194ff., 199, 201ff., 205, 209, 214, 257, and 260. In AD

- 204 he was *consul ordinarius*. Cilo became important enough in Spain to serve as patron to officers from that part of the empire. See CIL VI 1410, where a M. Vibius Maternus from Iluro in Baetica, *a militiis*, is mentioned as a *candidatus L. Fabii M.f. Galeria Septimini Cilonis, praefecti urbi, c.v., consul II*. See Devijver 1976, 865, V 98.
- 66 Mennen 2011, 49–134.
- 67 See Drew-Bear *et al.* 1977, 355–83, esp. 365–77.
- 68 See Crawford 1975, 562–4; Duncan-Jones 1994, 97ff.; Bland 1996, 67f.; Kreucher 2003, 228; Eich 2005, 366f.; Cosme 2009, 221ff. In estimating the fineness of coins most authors, among them Roger Bland, still follow Walker 1976–78, but there is every reason to accept instead the more accurate estimates of Gitler and Ponting 2003.
- 69 Gitler and Ponting 2003, 7; Corbier in CAH² XII, 2005, 333 and 339 (maintenance of weight, reduction of fineness by one third).
- 70 As Manders 2012, 64 says, referring to Hekster in De Blois *et al.* 2003, 28 with n. 34. Cf. Corbier in CAH² XII, 2005, 342, 344, 350. According to Crawford 1975, 574, the minting of bronze coinage was interrupted between 199 and 209. Apparently there was no need for it.
- 71 Crawford 1975, 560, 566. Cf. Sartre 2005, 249–58.
- 72 See Ziegler in Kennedy 1996, 119–34; Butcher 2004, 261–4. Cf. Nollé in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 284. According to Callu 1975, 597, bronze local coinage became extinct after 276.
- 73 Heller in Quet 2006, 298.
- 74 On this siege see Cassius Dio 75.10; Herodian 3.9.1–7. On Hatra and its history between Rome and the Parthians or Persians see Dirven 2013, esp. the contributions by Benjamin Isaac (pp. 23–31) and Michael Sommer (pp. 33–44).
- 75 See Kaizer in Dirven 2013, 57–71 and Gawlikowski in Dirven 2013, 73–9.
- 76 *Feriale Duranum* I 14ff. On this Parthian war see Cassius Dio 75.9; Herodian 3.9.9–12; HA *Severus* 15–16.
- 77 See Cassius Dio 75.11–12. On the sieges of Hatra see Drijvers 1977, 817.
- 78 On the province of Mesopotamia see Ross 2001, 47–57, and Speidel, M.A. 2007.
- 79 See Eusebius, *HE* 6.1–3. His work may very well be a reliable source of information because he is giving relevant and convincing details, such as names of victims, dates, and the name of a governor (Aquila, probably Subatianus Aquila, prefect of Egypt in 206, see P. Oxy.1100). Eusebius tells us that one of the victims was the father of Origenes, the Christian scholar and philosopher. In 6.3.3 the author briefly remarks that this persecution was still going on when Aquila was governing Egypt.
- 80 See Bowman 1971, 121–3; idem 1986, 67–71; Bowman and Rathbone 1992, 107–27; Birley 1999, 136–40.
- 81 Kienast 2004, 157. On Severus' *decennalia* see De Blois 2017a, 339–44.
- 82 See RIC IV 1, 269 nrs. 359 and 361. See Cassius Dio 76.1.1–3.
- 83 On Severus adorning and elevating his home town see Mattingly 1995, 120–2; Cordovana 2007, 323–432, esp. 323–41; Wilson in Swain *et al.* 2007, 295–307; Lichtenberger 2011, 27–37, 137–45; Faust in Faust and Leitmer 2011, 111–45; Rowan 2012, 84–99, 102.
- 84 On the *ludi saeculares* see Lichtenberger 2011, 51, 66–70, 271–6.
- 85 On the fall of Plautianus see Cassius Dio 76.3–4; Herodian 3.10.5–12.12. Plautianus may have overstepped the line. Pflaum 1960, 647–9, nr. 241 (cf. CIL III 6075 = ILS 1366) knows of an anonymity who was at one moment in his career Plautianus' *comes*, which was explicitly mentioned in his career-inscription. In 3.10.6f. Herodian tells us that Plautianus in his youth may have been Severus' boy-lover, and rose from humble circumstances to a position of great power and vast wealth because Severus showered riches upon him and virtually gave him a share in the empire. On Plautianus overstepping the line see Daguet-Gagey in Quet 2006, 65–94, esp. 91.

- 86 Kienast 2004, 165.
- 87 See Pflaum 1960, 691–4, nr. 257, Ulpian Victor. He was, at one stage of his career, *procurator ad bona Plautiani*. See ILS 1370 = CIL III 1464.
- 88 On Severus' campaigns in Britain see Birley 1999, 170–87; idem 2005, 195–203; idem in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 367–9; Campbell in CAH XII² 2005, 8. Hispania Tarraconensis, which had an 'Albinian' past, like Britain, was temporarily split up into two provinces by Caracalla. See Alföldy 2000, 7–51. According to Birley in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 45, Caracalla and Geta gave up Severus' gains in Britain after their father had died in 211.
- 89 Crawford 1975, 565.
- 90 Ando 2000, 136. On Severus emphasizing his family, his *domus divina*, in imperial representation see Lichtenberger 2011, 339–78. Concordia-propaganda is to be found on the following coins of Caracalla (joint reign): RIC IV 1, 214, nr. 17 (*aureus*): the obverse carries the legend Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (Caracalla) Augustus, and the reverse Publius Septimius Geta Caesar (AD 198); 218, nr. 36 (*aureus*): the obverse shows the legend Antoninus Augustus, the reverse Concordiae Aeternae, with images of Septimius Severus and Iulia Domna (AD 199–200). RIC IV 1, 234, nr. 152, showing Caracalla and Geta with Victoria, explicitly connects this concord with the dynasty's potential for victory.
- 91 That this rivalry reached the provinces is corroborated by the fate of Gaius Iulius Marcus. He was governor of Britain and clearly needed to affirm the army's and his own loyalty to Caracalla. An altar dedicated for the welfare of Caracalla by the procurator Cocceius Nigrinus, near the western part of Hadrian's wall, fits this context. All in vain, though. Marcus' names were effectively deleted on several stones. See Birley 2005, 207.
- 92 Kemmers in Faust and Leitmer 2011, 270–90. On this struggle between two brothers see Cassius Dio 77.4.1; Herodian 3.13.1–6; 4.1.5; 4.3.1ff.; 4.4.1f. Cf. Ioannes Antiochenus, FHG IV p. 588, 130.3, 131.1ff. See Hekster 2008, 48.
- 93 Cassius Dio 77.1–3; Herodian 4.4.2–8; Zosimus 1.9.1f.; HA *Antoninus Caracalla* 1–2; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 20.32–4; Ioannes Antiochenus, FHG IV, 589, 131.3f. On the murder of Geta see Potter 2004, 133–9. On the 50 per cent rise in pay see Speidel, M.A. 2009, 367, 371 (table 4), and 380 (table 7).
- 94 RIC IV 2, 107, nr. 449 (bronze coin, mint of Rome, thermae of Severus Alexander). See Schröder in Faust and Leitmer 2011, 179–92.
- 95 On this round of debasement of the imperial gold and silver coinage see Crawford 1975, 565f.; Bland 1996, 68; Carrié and Rousselle 1999, 85; Corbier in CAH XII² 2005, 333.
- 96 Cassius Dio 77.4.1–6.1; Herodian 4.6.1–5. Papinian's death is also mentioned in some later, brief reports about Caracalla's reign: Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 20.34; HA *Antoninus Caracalla* 4.1; 8.1ff.; Zosimus 1.9.1f.
- 97 To quote Manders 2012, 226. On Geta's drastic *damnatio memoriae* see Mennen in De Blois *et al.* 2006, 260. Geta was also chiseled away on the so-called arch of the *argentarii* on the Roman Forum Boarium. On this monument see Newby in Christie 2004, 218–22.
- 98 P.Yale inv. 1531. See Hagedorn 1992, 279–84, esp. 282–4.
- 99 De Jong 2006a, 146–52.
- 100 On the *constitutio Antoniniana* see P.Giss.40 col.I; Ulpian, *Dig.* 1.5.17, and Cassius Dio 77.9.5. See Garnsey 2004, 133ff.; Honoré 2004, 114f.; Christol 2006a, 40f.; Zecchini 2007, 65–81; Hekster 2008, 47–53. On this measure and its effects see also Ando 2012, 76–99.
- 101 Buraselis 2007, 14–23, 36–46, 47–66, and esp. 90–2; Schettino 2008a, 996f.
- 102 P.Giss.40, col. I, esp. ll. 4–8. See Ando 2000, 395 (Caracalla's measure as an act of piety) and Kemezis 2014, 32f. (Caracalla wished 'his people,' *i.e.* all free inhabitants of the empire, to stand by him after the murder of Geta).

- 103 Taegeter 1960, 427. In 77.16.1 Cassius Dio seems to know that Caracalla claimed that he was the most pious of all mankind. In his coinage from AD 212 onwards, as Manders 2012, 228–33 demonstrates, Caracalla stressed the divine, gods playing an important role on his coin types minted during those years. On the religious motivation of Caracalla's *constitutio* of 212, see De Blois 2014, 1014–21.
- 104 Rowan 2012, 110–12. Caracalla's predilection for Apollo, Aesculapius, and Serapis might point at serious illness, see Rowan 2012, 110–63, esp. 112–15.
- 105 See Stolte in De Blois 2001a, 167–79, esp. 178.
- 106 Cassius Dio 77.13–14; cf. Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 21.2. See Christol 2006a, 41f., and Drinkwater 2007, 50.
- 107 See Wolfram 1997, 35–50, esp. 40; Drinkwater 2007, 45ff.; Batty 2007, 186. On the Goths entering Roman history about 238 see Kulikowski 2007, 14–33; Batty 2007, 381–99; Christol 2006a, 95f.
- 108 Wolfram 1997, 47. On the ethnogenesis of Germanic tribes see Liebeschuetz 2015, 85–100 (this article on the debate about the ethnogenesis of the Germanic tribes had previously been published in Amirav and Ter Haar Romeny 2007, 341–55). In his view, at the time of the great migrations in the fifth century AD the various Germanic tribes possessed core traditions, which made it possible for them to function as effective units, and to survive from generation to generation. He opposes, in my view rightly, the opinion that Germanic tribes even by that time did not yet have such traditions at all.
- 109 On these *correctores* see Giardina 1993, 55; Porena 2003, 61. On Suetrius Sabinus see CIL X 5398 = ILS 1159: *electus ad corrigendum statum Italiae*. Crook 1975, 84f., and Christol 2006a, 42 mention him among Caracalla's friends.
- 110 Peachin 1996, 101–6, referring to CIL X 5178, Casinum; CIL 5398 = ILS 1159, Aquinum; CIL VI 1551 + 1477 = AE 1985, 37, Rome, and CIL IX 2848 = AE 1985, 332, Histonium.
- 111 In 77.14.3–4 Dio says that the gold that he gave the Germans was genuine, whereas the silver and gold currency that he furnished to the Romans was debased; for he manufactured the one kind out of lead plated with silver and the other out of copper plated with gold.
- 112 RIC IV 1, 245, nr. 237 and 260, nr. 316, AD 213, in gold and silver. On those victory titles see Kienast 2004, 163; Christol 2006a, 42.
- 113 Cassius Dio 77.18.1; Herodian 4.8.2f. That Spartans would enlist is not an outlandish idea. Cf. SEG 42, 1992, 90, nr. 320 and 91, nr. 323, c. 200–250, about two Spartans who as *socii* joined the battle against the Persians.
- 114 On Caracalla's march see Potter 2004, 140–4; Kienast 2004, 162f. On Caracalla's behavior see Cassius Dio 77.19–20, a biased anti-Caracalla description, though. On his wit and *paideia* see Cassius Dio 78.8.4f. Caracalla was certainly interested in Greek sophists; he received them into his presence and appointed two of them, Quirinus and Heliodorus, to the posts of *advocatus fisci*, with equestrian rank, because of their skill in oratory, especially courtroom-speaking; see Philostratus VS 621 and 626.
- 115 See Cosme in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 99.
- 116 As is indicated by P. Flor. 382. See Christol 2006a, 45.
- 117 See Bruun 1995, 9–27. He mentions a centurion of *legio II Parthica* who served in Alexandria and dedicated the following text (AE 1995, 255): *Iovi O.M./ pro salute et reditu/ imp.Caes.[L.Septimi Severi /et ip.caes.M.Aurel.Anton/ini et P.Septim.L.f. Get]/ae nobiliss[i]mi [Caesar.]/ C.Cassius Sever[ian.]/ praep.militum [–]/leg.II Parthica[e Sever.]/p.f.f(elicis) aet(ernae), eiusdemqu[e] princeps et primuspil./et quod Alexandriae/ cum 7 (centurio) ageret in pericu/lis constitutus numi/ne eius adiuvante libera/tus it ex voto posuit*. According to Bruun, this text had to do with Caracalla's stay in Alexandria in 215–16.
- 118 Marasco 1994, 495–511.
- 119 On the end of the kingdom of Osrhoene see Ross 2001, 57–63.

- 120 Marcus Oclatinius Adventus had started his career as a *speculator* (scout) of a governor, and had been *frumentarius*, *centurio frumentariorum*, *princeps peregrinorum* (an important function in the camp of the *frumentarii* in Rome), *primus pilus* (in AD 197, fifty years old), and *procurator* in Britannia, AD 205–207. In 217 he became praetorian prefect, as a colleague to Macrinus, his future emperor. On this military man see PIR² O 9; Birley 2005, 312f.; Mennen 2011, 23, 164, 167, 208f.
- 121 On Caracalla's aggressive behavior see Cassius Dio 78.1.1–3, and Herodian 4.10–11, both highly rhetorical and exaggerated passages, but they may contain some truth.
- 122 On the murder of Caracalla and the preceding conspiracy see Cassius Dio 78.4–5; Herodian 4.12.3–13.8. See also Eutropius 8.20; HA *Antoninus Caracalla* 6.6 (conspiracy by two tribunes of the guard and Triccanus, the *praefectus legionis II Parthicae*); 8.10 (it was Macrinus who had Caracalla killed). On Aelius Triccanus see Faure 2013, II, 704–6, nr. 188.
- 123 See Pflaum 1960, II, 747–50, nr. 287.
- 124 On Julia's death see Cassius Dio 78.23; Herodian 4.13.8. On Julia's position, activities, and influence at the Severan court see Levick 2007, 57–123 and Schöpe 2014, 189ff. On her position under Caracalla see Levick 2007, 87–106. On her contacts with Philostratus and other intellectuals see Flinterman 1995, 13, 19f., 22–4, Levick 2007, 107–23, and Whitmarsh in Swain *et al.* 2007, 31–4. Cassius Dio may have been familiar with those intellectuals; see Moscovitch 2004, 356–68.
- 125 Cassius Dio 78.26.5ff. However, Herodian 4.15 describes the battle as a harsh, regular encounter ending in a draw. Both sides had lost many men and did not want to continue the war. Perhaps we should trust Cassius Dio better in this case because he could know eye-witnesses and first-hand reports. Of course Macrinus himself claimed a victory, see RIC IV 2, 12, nrs. 96–8 (Victoria Parthica).
- 126 The undisciplined behavior and low fighting quality of the armies of the east is a *locus communis*, which dates back as far as the first century AD; see Isaac 1990, 23–5.
- 127 Duncan-Jones 1994, 45.
- 128 On Macrinus' career see Herodian 4.12.1; Pflaum 1960, II, p. 667–72, nr. 248; Crook 1975, nr. 241; Salway 1997, 151; Kienast 2004, 169f.; PIR² O 108. Mennen 2011, 147 makes clear that Macrinus may have been one of the *equites* who reached the highest equestrian prefectures after having played a significant role in military logistics. On his reign see Kienast 2004, 169f.; Potter 2004, 146–53; Christol 2006a, 49–54. Hardly any of the literary sources is positive about Macrinus' competence, authority, and energy. An exception is Syncellus 436 where Macrinus is told to have been humane and considerate, especially in military affairs, and to have kept his subjects free from harm.
- 129 Pflaum 1960, II, 750–2, nr. 288; Faure 2013, II, 706f., nr. 189.
- 130 Cassius Dio 78.13.2f. On Castinus see CIL III 10471 = AE 1890, 82 = AE 1972, 378; CIL III 10472 = AE 1972, 378; CIL III 10473 = ILS 1153 = AE 1972, 378; AE 1959, 327.
- 131 Cassius Dio 78.13.1–4, 78.14, 78.21.5.
- 132 Bland 1996, 69.
- 133 See Bland 1996, 75f.; Corbier in CAH XII² 2005, 334.
- 134 Cassius Dio 78.30.2ff.; AE 1921, 64; AE 1962, 229. See Pflaum 1979, 298–314; Icks 2011, 55f. On Avitus Alexianus see also Leunissen 1989, 44ff., 159, 225, 240, 280, 300, 320, 339, 367, and Mennen 2011, 194f., 201, 203, 205, 208–10, 214. He came from Emesa, and was probably *consul suffectus* in 200 AD. On Iulia Maesa see PIR² I 678; Kienast 2004, 181.
- 135 Birley 2005, 225f.
- 136 On Soaemias see PIR² I 704; Icks 2011, 56. On Sex. Varius Marcellus and his career see ILS 478 = CIL X 6569; Icks 2011, 56f.

- 137 Icks 2011, 59. See also PIR² V 184; Kienast 2004, 172; Hekster 2015, 218f.
- 138 Cassius Dio 79.30–31, 80.17.2; Herodian 5.3.3, 5.7.3f.; Icks 2011, 57f. See also PIR² A 1610; Kienast 2004, 178. On Iulia Avita Mamaea see PIR² I 649; Kienast 2004, 180. Mamaea's second husband, Gessius Marcianus, may also have been Alexianus' father; see Bertrand-Dagenbach 1990, 15f.
- 139 On this deity, originally a local mountain god, see Icks 2011, 48–52.
- 140 Cassius Dio 78.39.5–40.5. On this remarkable usurpation of imperial power see Cassius Dio 78.28–41; Herodian 5.3–4; HA *Macrinus* 8.2; Ioannes Antiochenus, FHG IV 589f., 136.3–7. See Icks 2011, 10–18; Altmayer 2014b, 75–89.
- 141 Icks 2011, 9f. On Elagabalus' reign and behavior see Cassius Dio 80.14–16; Herodian 5.5–6; Zosimus 1.10–11; Eutropius 8.22; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 23.1–3; Orosius 7.18.4f.; HA Heliogabalus 1–35; Syncellus 437. See Altmayer 2014b, 90–186. On Elagabalus' reign and his reputation in our main literary sources see Sommer 2004, 95–110; Icks 2011, 92–122. A very elaborate survey of all evidence and publications about Elagabalus and his backgrounds is given by Prado 2010, 57–163.
- 142 RIC IV 2, 37, nrs. 130f. and 43, nr. 194 (*denarii*). On Elagabalus' strongly religious disposition and policy see Icks in De Blois *et al.* 2006, 173–8; Icks in Turner *et al.* 2010, 335–41; Icks 2011, 25–37. Illustrative is that Elagabalus more than any other emperor had himself depicted on his coins as priest. See Manders 2012, 136, fig. 23 (almost 15 per cent of Elagabalus' coin types). See Rowan 2012, 164–218.
- 143 On Maesa's and Soaemias' influence at Elagabalus' court see Schöpe 2014, 197–206 who gives a nuanced and sensible assessment of their influence at Elagabalus' court.
- 144 See Salway 1997, 127–53, esp. 129–31. This ... atus became a *studiis* (equestrian), *legatus legionis* (senatorial), *comes*, *consul suffectus*, *amicus fidissimus* in the imperial *consilium*, subsequently *praefectus annonae* (equestrian), *praefectus praetorio* (equestrian), and *pontifex* in some minor colleges of priests (senatorial). For more examples of Elagabalus' erratic appointment policies see Cassius Dio 80.15–16.
- 145 CIL XIV 3553. See Icks 2011, 21f.
- 146 On this coup see Cassius Dio 80.17–21; Herodian 5.7–8.
- 147 See Hekster 2015, 219.
- 148 See RIC IV 2, 123f., nrs. 659–667 (bronze coins from the mint of Rome, showing both the emperor and his mother on the obverses); 126, nrs. 689–91, bronze coins from the mint of Rome, on which Mamaea is called *mater augusti* and *mater castrorum*. One representative title of Mamaea under Alexander is ILS 485 = CIL II 3413, from Cartagena, Spain: *Iuliae Avitae Mamaeae Augustae matri domini nostri sanctissimi imperatoris Severi Alexandri Pii Felicis Augusti et castrorum et senatus et patriae et universi generis humani conventus Karthaginiensis*. Cf. ILS 482, 484, and 486. On Alexander's representation see Lichtenberger 2011, 151.
- 149 See Schöpe 2014, 207–13. On the image of Alexander's reign, the position of his womenfolk included, see Herodian 6.1–10; Zonaras 12.15.571f.; Ioannes Antiochenus FHG IV p. 593, 140. HA *Alexander Severus* is a mirror of princes, not an historiographical work. See Bertrand-Dagenbach 1990, 189–93.
- 150 In AE 1988, 1051 from Tyre, his home town in Syria, Ulpian is called *iurisconsultus item praefectus annonae*, and praetorian prefect. See CJ 8.37.4 (31–3–222, *praefectus annonae*) and 4.65.4.1 (1–12–222, *praefectus praetorio*). On Ulpian and his death see Crifò 1976, 708–89, esp. 773–7; Honoré 2002, 7–35, esp. 7f.; Faro 2002, 251–87; Christol 2006a, 57f. In 80.4.2 Cassius Dio seems to be wrong about the date of Ulpian's death, which he places much later. On Flavianus and Chrestus see Cassius Dio 80.2.2; Zosimus 1.11.2f.; Zonaras 12.15, 571. The text of CJ 4.65.4 suggests intimacy between the emperor and Ulpian: *qui si maiorum animadversionem exigere rem deprehenderit, ad Domitium Ulpianum praefectum praetorio et parentem meum reos remittere curabit*.

- 151 On imperial representation on Alexander's coinage, compared to other emperors from AD 193 onwards see Manders 2012, 65, fig. 17 (military representation, at best 12 per cent of Alexander's coin types); 100, fig.18 (divine association, 32 per cent of Alexander's coin types); 159, fig.25 (virtues, 19 per cent of Alexander's coin types); 190, fig.27 (golden age propaganda, 17 per cent of Alexander's coin types). According to Zecchini 2007, 57f., Alexander's reign could be characterized as 'monarchia illuminata' and 'impero dei giuristi,' which is an illusion.
- 152 The text is also published in Hunt-Edgar, p. 94–9, nr. 216. See Oliver 1978, 474–85. The text is dated to AD 224. On the crown tax, which under the Severans had to be paid at accessions and as a regular tax, see Millar 1992, 140–2. On this tax in Egypt see Bowman 1967, 59–74. See also Ando 2000, 365f.
- 153 Duncan-Jones 1994, 7. By the time of the Severans *aurum coronarium* was to be paid both at accessions and victories, but tended to become a regular tax.
- 154 Cassius Dio 77.9.2.
- 155 Rowan 2012, 219–45.
- 156 Mennen 2011, 49–134.
- 157 Eusebius, *HE* 6.21.3.
- 158 See De Blois in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 506. On the reign of Severus Alexander see also Ando 2012, 68–75.
- 159 See Ando 2000, 366.
- 160 See above, p. 43. On Alexander's monetary policy see De Blois 2006a, 49ff.
- 161 On Alexander's and especially Mamaea's reputation of meanness see Herodian 6.1.8 and 6.9.8. Cf. Ioannes Antiochenus FHG IV, 593, 140 and Zonaras 12.15, 571–2.
- 162 On Alexander's representation see Lichtenberger 2011, 151.
- 163 See De Blois 2006a, 46.
- 164 See Cassius Dio 80.4.2. On Dio's ideas about the military see De Blois 1997, 2660–75; idem 1998, 3411f.
- 165 Millar in Troiani and Zecchini 2005, 31f.
- 166 See Hartmann 2001, 65; Frye in CAH XII² 2005, 465–7; Wiesehöfer in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 536. Ardashir not only defeated the Parthians and many local rulers, but – unlike his Parthian predecessors – the Sassanian ruler removed many local princes and appointed members of his own family in their place, as his lieutenants (Frye, *ibidem*, 467).
- 167 See Millar 2004, 195–221. On the better quality of Sassanian forces see Schippmann 1990, 103–6.
- 168 On the Arsacids in Armenia after 224 see Lightfoot in CAH XII² 2005, 491ff.; Kettenhofen in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 480–3.
- 169 See Potter 1990, 378–80; idem 2004, 223–5; Kettenhofen 2002, 50–75. On Palmyra and its outposts see Drexhage 1988, esp. 61–86; Sartre in CAH XII² 2005, 511f.; Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 344f. On Dura-Europos see Perkins 1959, 22ff.; Millar 1993, 131ff.; Feissel and Gascou 1995, 102ff.; Sartre 2005, 348f. On Hatra see AE 1958, 238f.; Drijvers 1977, 825–8; Kettenhofen 1982, 20; Sartre 2005, 345f.; Christol 2006a, 72; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 26–31; Hauser in Dirven 2013, 119–39.
- 170 See Cassius Dio 80.4.1; Herodian 6.2.2; Zonaras 12.15, 573. That the Persians wanted to restore the old Achaemenid empire was a Roman propagandistic view; the aims of the first two Sassanid kings were much more restricted. See Drinkwater 1989, 126; Potter 1990, 372–6; idem 2004, 225; Kettenhofen 1994, 98–108; idem 2002, 50–75; Hartmann 2001, 67; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 19–23. Hauser in Dirven 2013, 139 argues that Ardashir was attempting to restore the Arsacid Parthian Empire as it had been before the wars of Lucius Verus and Septimius Severus.
- 171 See Potter 1990, 372–6; Wiesehöfer 1994, 51f., 208, and 215f.; Hartmann 2001, 67.
- 172 Millar 1993, 149, referring to AE 1972, 625–8.

- 173 On his life and career see ILS 1330 = CIL XIII 1807; cf. AE 2000, 1505; PIR² F 581; Pflaum 1960 II, 811–21 nr. 317; Devijver 1976, 391, F 99; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 182 with note 193; Johnes *et al.* 2008, II, 1071 PPO 4; Mennen 2011, 138f. See also Pollard 2000, 186. He may originally have come from Anatolia. In HA *Gordiani tres* 23–25, he is elaborately praised, among other things for his *paideia*.
- 174 See Dodgeon and Lieu 1994, 22, where they cite CISem II 3932, an inscription from a statue of Iulius Zabdilal (Gr.: Zenobios), *strategos* of the *colonia* Palmyra when Alexander came. He was honored ‘because he helped Rutilius Crispinus when he brought the legions here.’
- 175 On Alexander’s eastern campaign see Herodian 6.5–6; Zonaras 12.15, 573. See Potter 1990, 378–80; Sartre 2005, 343; Campbell in CAH XII² 2005, 26; Christol 2006a, 74.
- 176 Ziegler 1985, 90ff. According to Butcher 2004, 44–6, many local coins were minted in Antioch in Syria under Elagabalus and Alexander, to provide the multitude of small change necessary when a great number of soldiers would enter the markets and change the silver coins they had received. Nothing of the kind happened under Maximinus Thrax.
- 177 On Alexander’s activities on the Rhine at the end of his reign see Herodian 6.7.1–10; Zonaras 12.15, 573f. See Potter 2004, 167; Campbell in CAH XII² 2005, 26; Christol 2006a, 75.
- 178 See Eck 2000b, 87f.; idem in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 31f. Maybe the Romans saw it coming earlier. AE 2000, 1018 (cf. CIL XIII 8824, 8825, and 8828 from Leiden-Roomburg, AD 222–235) indicates that there were military building activities under Severus Alexander (and earlier Severan emperors) in Germania Inferior, especially at the Dutch *limes*.
- 179 Already Septimius Severus may have had Parthian deserters in his ranks. See Devijver 1976, 114f., A 148, referring to CIL VIII 9371 = ILS 1355 (Mauretania Caesariensis, period of Septimius Severus), mentioning Anullius Geta, *ex praefecto alae Augustae Parthorum*, serving in North Africa. Some archers were veterans, kept with the army. See Devijver 1976, 331, D 25, referring to CIL III 3388: Domitius Magnus, *praefectus alae I Thracum Severianae Alexandrianae veteranorum*. They were *sagittarii*, archers. Syrian units had already been at the Danube border, at Intercisa (Pannonia Inferior), under Severus Alexander and his predecessor. See Devijver 1976, 674f., P 98, referring to M. Porcius Verus, *tribunus cohortis milliariae Hemesenorum equitatae civium Romanorum* (period of Severus Alexander), and 580, M 65, mentioning AE 1910, 141 = ILS 9155, about a Q. Modius Rufinus who had been involved in restoring a temple of the god Sol Elagabalus at Intercisa. He was a *tribunus cohortis milliariae Antoninianae Hemesenorum civium Romanorum sagittariorum*.
- 180 On his career see Haegemans 2010, 47, 49–56.
- 181 See CIL X 1127. See Dobson 1978, 102 and 269f., nr. 154.
- 182 ILS 1330. See Mennen 2011, 138. A comparable combination is implied by CIL V 5036, where we are told that Gaius Valerius Marinus, an eques from Trento, North Italy, was *adlectus annonae legionis III Italicae*, which was situated at the Raetian *limes*, in the forefront of north Italy.
- 183 On the date of death of Alexander and his mother in February or March 235 see Peachin 1990, 26f.; Kienast 2004, 177; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 161 with note 1. On Maximinus’ usurpation see Herodian 6.8–9, and Ioannes Antiochenus FHG IV 593f, 141.2–6. See Haegemans 2010, 56f.
- 184 See HA *Maximini duo* 10–11. See Ross 2001, 67f.; Drinkwater in CAH XII² 2005, 29; Haegemans 2010, 93–6.
- 185 Haegemans 2010, 74f. See also Speidel, M.A. 2009, 371, table 4, and 380, table 7.

- 186 According to Michael Speidel, they now received 432,000 sesterces per annum. See Speidel, M.A. 2009, 380, table 7.
- 187 Manders 2012, 65, fig.17 (more than 50 per cent of Maximinus' coin types had a military orientation, by far the largest percentage of all third-century emperors).
- 188 On Maximinus' career see PIR² I 619; Kienast 2004, 183–5; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 161–3; Haegemans 2010, 52–6. Maximinus may have belonged to the group of *primi pili* who made good equestrian careers.
- 189 See Martin in Quet 2006, 95–106.
- 190 Mócsy 1977, 561f. On Maximinus' campaigns see Lorient 1975, 674–6. On Maximinus' wars in the Balkans, particularly about Dacia in 236–237, see Piso 2005, 95–107; Batty 2007, 376–8. Maximinus probably had to fight not only Germans, Sarmatians, and other steppe tribes, but also 'free Dacians,' mobile warrior groups, for example the Carpi who were living about the northeast corner of Roman Dacia.
- 191 On this battle at the Harzhorn, near Kalefeld in Niedersachsen see Berger *et al.* 2010, 313–402; Pöppelmann *et al.* 2013. Maximinus claimed a Victoria Germanica, see RIC IV 2, 146, nrs. 70–4 and 147, nrs. 90–94 (all of them bronze coins from the mint of Rome) and the silver medallions RIC IV 2, 151, nrs. 115f. and 152, nr. 121.
- 192 On Maximinus' war in Germany see Herodian 7.2.1–9. In 7.2.8 he mentions Maximinus' reports to Rome, with huge pictures representing his successes (cf. HA *Maximini duo* 12.10f.). On Maximinus see also Eutropius 9.1; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 26.1; HA *Maximini duo* 11.7–13.3; Zonaras 12.16, 576. According to HA *Alexander Severus* 61.8, Maximinus' victorious army was actually the army Alexander had assembled at Mogontiacum. On Maximinus' campaigns in Germany see Lorient 1975, 672–6, 753–7; Lippold 1984, 197–213; Drinkwater in CAH XII² 2005, 30; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 166f.; Christol 2006a, 79f.; Haegemans 2010, 58–66. According to Huttner, *op. cit.*, 166, Maximinus' campaign was exceptionally gruesome and cruel. On Maximinus' financial problems and harsh ways of fund raising see Gradel 2002, 357–8; Potter 2004, 168f.; De Blois in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 505; Haegemans 2010, 118–25. On Maximinus' reputation in general see Martin in Quet 2006, 95–106.
- 193 Isaac 1978, 55; Haegemans 2010, 69–72; Bartels in Kolb 2014, 222–45 (Moesia Inferior, a program of road repair under Gordian III that was started by Maximinus). See also AE 1999, 397 (road repair and raising of recruits in North Italy). On p. 54ff. Isaac counts after Caracalla two *miliaria* put up in the east by Severus Alexander, eight by Maximinus, and one by Gordian III; hence nothing, until Diocletian. Inscriptions from Aquileia show that there was road repair going on there too. See CIL V 7989–7990 and AE 2000, 604 (*miliaria* of Maximinus in the region of Aquileia). AE 1919, 256–7 suggests that some of the work was being done by recruits from Italy, 'tirones iuventutis novae Italicae suae dilectus posterioris.'
- 194 See HA *Gordiani tres* 26.6; Syncellus 443; Zonaras 12.18. See Lorient 1975, 759–63; Dodgeon and Lieu 1994, 43f.; Mitchell 2001, 237; Wiesehöfer in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 537; Christol 2006a, 97; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 29.
- 195 Butcher 2004, 46.
- 196 See Ziegler in Kennedy 1996, 119–34.
- 197 CIL XIII 7844. See Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 33f.
- 198 In a highly rhetorical, undoubtedly exaggerated sentence the author of the *Historia Augusta* (HA *Gordiani tres* 7.2) says: 'quidam rationalis acrius contra plurimos Afrorum saeviret quam Maximinus ipse pateretur, proscribens plurimos, interficiens multos et sibi ultra procuratorem omnia vindicans.' This bureaucrat acted worse than Maximinus Thrax would have condoned (!).
- 199 Polley 2007, 166.
- 200 On this rebellion and its backgrounds see Herodian 7.4.2–6; HA *Maximini duo* 14.1–3; Ioannes Antiochenus FHG IV 595, 146.1f.; Zosimus 1.14.1. See Lorient 1975, 688–96; Kolb, F., 1977, 440–77; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 169f.; Christol 2006a, 85; Hilali in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 57–61, and especially Haegemans 2010, 131–44.

- 201 See Philostratus, *VS* 479f. Philostratus dedicated his *Vitae sophistarum* to this Gordianus.
- 202 See Birley 2005, 338ff.
- 203 On Gordian I and II see PIR² A 833 and 834; Barnes 1968, 581–97; Dietz 1980, 56–75; Bland 1991, 484–514; Kienast 2004, 188–90; Polley 2007, 153–5; Haegemans 2010, 144–8. According to Peachin 1990, 28, referring to P.Oxy.43, 3107, they were recognized in the Oxyrhynchite nome in Egypt some time between 7 April and 13 June 238, hence between about 8 March and 14 May at Rome.
- 204 On Vitalianus see Johnes *et al.* 2008, II, 1071 PPO 1.
- 205 See Herodian 7.9.1–10; HA *Maximini duo* 19.1–3; HA *Gordiani tres* 15.1–3; Ioannes Antiochenus FHG IV 595, 146.4–6. See Lorient 1975, 700–2; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 172; Haegemans 2010, 160–4.
- 206 Herodian 7.1–6; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 26.7; HA *Maximini duo* 14–15. See Lorient 1975, 696–700; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 171ff.; Christol 2006a, 86; Haegemans 2010, 153–8, 185–95.
- 207 Haegemans 2010, 164. On the *XXviri* see Dietz 1980, 326–40; Haegemans 2010, 164–71.
- 208 Peachin 1990, 28f.
- 209 See above, n55.
- 210 See Haegemans 2010, 167–71. On the Caesonii see Mennen 2011, 55–64, esp. 59 (on the *vigintivir* L. Caesonius Lucillus Macer Rufinianus; see also Peachin 1996, 112–14). On Priscilianus see Mennen 2011, 124. On Licinius Rufinus see Herrmann 1997, 111–23; Millar 1999, 96–100; Haegemans 2010, 169f.; Mennen 2011, 153.
- 211 Gallicanus was probably L. Domitius Gallicanus Papinianus, whose career has been found in an inscription from Carthage, ILAfr 322, and ‘Maecenas’ may be an error for P. Messius Augustinus Maecianus, another African senator (AE 1932, 34), a son of a distinguished Severan lawyer. See Whittaker 1969–1970, II, 234f., notes 1 and 2; Leunissen 1989, 321f. (Gallicanus); Roques 1990, 278, notes 96 and 97; De Blois 2004, 559 with note 1.
- 212 Herodian 7.11–12. See De Blois 2004, 559–62.
- 213 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 27.2 relates that after the coup of the two Gordians in Africa the praetorian guard was defeated in a battle against gladiators and an army consisting of recruits. Apparently he concocted several events and stories together. *Iuventutes* were groups of young men who could be called up to defend their towns.
- 214 Herodian 7.8.11. On preparing a campaign see HA *Alexander Severus* 17.1: soldiers could carry food for 17 days, except in the enemy’s country. Evidence about soldiers and officers serving at supply stations along military transit routes, for example epigraphic texts on gravestones, is provided by Speidel, M.A. 2009, 257–60 and 269.
- 215 See CIL V 7989 = ILS 487.
- 216 On these two commanders see above, pp. 59–60. See also Whittaker 1969–1970, 261 note 2 (Rutilius Pudens Crispinus), referring to AE 1929, 158: [*electus dux?*] *ex senatus consulto bello Aquileiensi*, and 261 note 3 (Tullius Menophilus), with a reference to AE 1962, 265. Devijver 1976, 362, F 36 (Flavius Adiutor) and 378f., F 72 (Flavius Servilianus) mentions two men who in AE 1934, 230 are pointed out as *praepositi militum agentium in protensione (SIC) Aquileiae*.
- 217 Herodian 8.2.2.; 8.5.3; cf. HA *Maximini duo* 23.1.
- 218 On Maximinus’ march, the siege of Aquileia and his death see Herodian 8.1–6; HA *Maximini duo* 21–3; HA *Maximus et Balbinus* 10–11; Ioannes Antiochenus FHG IV 595, 146.7–12; Zosimus 1.15.1f. See Piso 2005, 106 (Maximinus killed by soldiers of the *legio II Parthica*); Haegemans 2010, 197–211.
- 219 See RIC IV 2, 170 nrs. 11 and 12, and 174 nrs. 9–11. On their mutual rivalry and quarrels see Herodian 2.8.4f.
- 220 Corbier in CAH XII² 2005, 334. Cf. Haegemans 2010, 216–19.

- 221 On this brief interlude between Maximinus and Gordian III see Herodian 8.7–8; HA *Maximus et Balbinus* 14. See Haegemans 2010, 213–16. The chronology of the year 238 has been established by Peachin 1989b.
- 222 On Gordian III and his reign see Lorient 1975, 724–75; Bland 1991, 486–514; Drinkwater in CAH XII² 2005, 33–6, and Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 180–9. On imperial representation on Gordian's coinage, compared to that of other emperors ruling from AD 193 onwards see Manders 2012, 65, fig. 17 (military representation, 20 per cent of Gordian's coin types); 100, fig.18 (divine associations, about 21 per cent of Gordian's coin types); 159, fig.25 (virtues, 23 per cent of Gordian's coin types); 190, fig.27 (golden age propaganda, about 19 per cent of Gordian's coin types).
- 223 Liebs in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 105.
- 224 Sirks in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 36 shows that Gordian III, together with Philip, Valerian/Gallienus, and Carus and his sons belongs to the few soldier-emperors (AD 235–284) who issued many rescripts. On the influence of scholarly jurists such as Papinian, Ulpian, and Modestinus at court see De Blois 2001b, 136–53, and idem in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 225–37.
- 225 Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 183. See also Lorient 1975, 715–17, 755–7; Christol 2006a, 96f. Petrus Patricius, FHG IV186f, frg 8, tells us that the Carpi asked Tullius Menophilus to give them subsidies, just as the Goths were receiving, because they were more important than the Goths. Tullius replied that they might have subsidies, if they would submit to the Roman emperor.
- 226 Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 182. On Timesitheus' career see above, p. 62. A coincidence is that right when his predominance at court began, the mint of Rome started an issue of coins showing the legend Aeternitati Augusti, with the sun god Sol, which went on as long as Timesitheus was alive. See RIC IV 3, 24, nr. 83 with a note on pp. 24f.
- 227 The daughter who was married to Gordian III was called Furia Sabinia Tranquillina. See CIL XIV 4398 = ILS 2159; PIR² F 587; Kienast 2004, 197.
- 228 Dodgeon and Lieu 1994, 32 mention SEG VII 1934, 743b, ll.17–19, a Greek *graffito* from the house of Nebuchelus at Dura, which tells us that on the 30th day of the month of Xandikos of the year 550 (Seleucid era, equivalent to 20 April 239) the Persians descended upon Dura-Europos, without taking it.
- 229 HA *Gordiani tres* 26.6; Zonaras 12.18; Syncellus 443 (Gordian III recaptured Carrhae and Nisibis, which both had been lost under Maximinus Thrax).
- 230 AE 1958, 239 and 240. See Kettenhofen 1982, 20; Sartre 2005, 343 and 345f.
- 231 www.dainst.org/sites/default/files/media/abteilungen/orient/redaktion/zora2_hauser_-_tucker.pdf?ft=all (10 December 2013). See Hauser in Dirven 2013, 122–33. That Hatra was taken between 12 April 240 and the first of April 241 is attested by Codex Manichaeus Coloniensis 18.1–16, ed. Koenen and Römer, 10–12. See Kettenhofen 1982, 20; Hauser in Dirven 2013, 121. On the fall of Hatra see also Drijvers 1977, 825–8; Drinkwater in CAH XII² 2005, 35, and Mosig-Walburg 2009, 30f.
- 232 Bland 1991, 489–92 thinks that Gordian III was there already in 339 but Halfmann 1986, 233f. does not do so. The latter's argument is more convincing. The main evidence seems to be a disputed rescript, which is not in the *Digesta*.
- 233 On Gordian III and Abgar X see Millar 1993, 151f.; Ross 2001, 69–82 (A king in Rome's service), esp.72–5, and 81. See IGR I 623 = ILS 8851: P. Aelius Ammonius began as a *praefectus cohortis V Hispanorum* in Moesia Superior, then to become *tribunus cohortis I Germanorum* in Cappadocia, where he became commander of a 'stratitikon' (a makeshift military unit), and *praefectus alae I Flaviae Gaetulorum*, at the Armenian front, c. AD 240.
- 234 In CIL III 99 (Bostra, period of the emperor Philip) = ILS 2771, the man who set up an inscription for Iulius Iulianus, v.e. *ducenarius*, prefect of the first legion Parthica (Mesopotamia), *dux devotissimus*, and *optimus praepositus*, is called Trebicius Gaudinus, *praefectus alae novae firmae milliariae catafractorum Philippianae*.

- 235 See Bartels in Kolb 2014, 222–45.
- 236 See Robert 1989, 652–7, esp. 656; Potter 1990, 371f. On the opening of Ianus see Eutropius 9.2.2; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 27.7; HA *Gordiani tres* 26.3; Ioannes Antiochenus FHG IV, 5 79, frg 147. Gold medallions dedicated to Apollo, the Greek god, were issued. See RIC IV 3, 25, nr. 96. Cf. RIC IV 3, 26, nrs. 102–4 (gold) and 27, nrs. 114 and 119 (silver). RIC IV 3, 29, nr. 135 (*aureus*) shows Gordian III on a quadriga, crowned by Victoria, and preceded by soldiers.
- 237 Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 3. On Plotinus and his philosophy see Männlein-Robert in Johnes *et al.* 2008, II, 920–2. On his pupil Porphyry, who wrote Plotinus' biography, see *ibidem* 923f.
- 238 RGDS 3 (Hekster 2008, 112f.). In CIL XIII 11979 = ILS 9182 = AE 1911, 236 S. Vibius Vitalis is mentioned as a prefect of a *numerus exploratorum Germanicianorum Divitiensium Gordianorum*. Cf. Devijver 1976, 872, V 108.
- 239 See Zosimus 17.2 and 18.2.
- 240 The text from Skaptopara, a petition to Gordian III (AD 238): CIL III suppl. 12336; IGR I 674; Sylloge Inscr. Graec³ 888; Herrmann 1990, 18–26, nr. 4; Hauken 1998, 74–137; Connolly 2010, 167–73; Manders and Hekster 2011, 154f. The inscription from Aragua, a petition to the emperor Philip submitted by *coloni* living on an imperial estate: OGIS 519; IGR IV 598; Herrmann 1990, nr. 6, 28–33; Hauken 1998, 140–61. On the problem of these military transit routes see Mitchell 2001, 232; De Blois 2006b, 28 with note 13; Speidel, M.A., in Kolb 2014, 91.
- 241 See RIC IV 3, 50, nr. 323 (an *as* from the mint of Rome), which carries the legends *traiectus Augusti*.
- 242 See HA *Gordiani tres* 26.4; Lorient 1975, 715–17; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 186.
- 243 The data: SEG 37, 1987, nr. 1820, referring to Kolb 1987, 99–132. On the battle at Rhessaena see Ammianus Marcellinus 23.5.17. On this campaign see RGDS 3–4; HA *Gordiani tres* 26.5–27.2; Zosimus 1.18.2f.; Ioannes Antiochenus FHG IV 597, frg 147; Syncellus 443; Zonaras 12.17–18. See Lorient 1975, 757–75; Kettenhofen 1982, 19–37; Potter 1990, 192–211; Bleckmann 1992, 57–76; Dodgeon and Lieu 1994, 34–48; Ross 2001, 70–2; Hartmann 2001, 69f.; Christol 2006a, 98–100; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 185–8; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 31–43; Ando 2012, 110–14.
- 244 On M. Iulius Philippus and his career see PIR² I 461; Körner 2002, 71–5; Kienast 2004, 198–9; Johnes *et al.* 2008, II, 1072 PPO 6. On C. Iulius Priscus see ILS 9005 = CIL 14149, IGR III 1033 = OGIS II 640; Pflaum 1960, II, 831–9, nrs 324 and 324a; PIR² I 488; Johnes *et al.* 2008, II, 1071 PPO 5. See Körner 2002, 55–9. On both brothers see SEG 37, 1987, nr. 1820; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 187; Mennen 2011, 142, 165, 168, 180.
- 245 On Gordian's defeat and death see RGDS 3–4; Oracula Sybillina 13.13–20, with Potter 1990, 36 and 203–11. In 23.5.17 Ammianus Marcellinus has the emperor Julian in 363 say, in a speech to his soldiers and officers: 'iunior Gordianus, cuius monumentum nunc vidimus honorate, apud Resainan superato fugatoque rege Persarum, ni factione Philippi praefecti praetorio scelesti iuvantibus paucis in hoc, ubi sepultus est, loco vulnere impio cecidisset' ('the younger Gordianus, whose monument we just now looked upon with reverence, would have come back with equal glory (like Trajan, Lucius Verus, and Septimius Severus, LdB), after vanquishing the Persian king and putting him to flight at Rhessaena, had he not been struck down by an impious wound inflicted by the faction of Philippus'). See also Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 27.8; Eutropius 9.2.3; Epitome 27; Festus 22; Orosius 7.19.5; Zosimus 1.18.2–19.1; Cedrenus I 450f.; Ioannes Antiochenus FHG IV 597, frg 147; Zonaras 12.18, and other sources mentioned by Körner 2002, 75–85. See Lorient 1975, 770–5; Kettenhofen 1982, 32f.; Eadie in Kennedy 1996, 144f.; Körner 2002, 75–92; Potter 2004, 236; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 187–9. According to Mosig-Walburg 2009, 34, Gordian died of his wounds, not as a victim of conspiracy.

- Referring to *CJ* 6.10.1 and 3.42.6, Lorient 1975, 789 argues that Gordian must have died after mid-January and before mid-March 244.
- 246 Peachin 1990, 30f.; Kienast 2004, 198.
- 247 23.5.17. See above, n243.
- 248 RIC IV 3, 76, nr. 69 (*antoniniani* from the mint of Antioch).
- 249 See RGDS 4 (500,000 *denarii*, but probably gold pieces, *pace* Eadie in Kennedy 1996, 146). Christol 2006a, 100, speaks of 500,000 'pièces d'or,' and Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 189f. of *aurei*. So does Ando 2012, 114. On this peace treaty see Körner 2002, 120–34; Potter 2004, 237.
- 250 On this town see Honigsmann and Maricq 1952, 111–22; Kettenhofen 1982, 32f.
- 251 This is one of the very few passages in his work where Zosimus says something like that.
- 252 Corbier in CAH XII² 2005, 334.
- 253 Parsons 1967, 134–41, and his comments to P. Oxy. 42, 3046–50. Cf. P. Wisc.2, 86 (AD 244–246); P. Oxy. 1, 78. See Körner 2002, 238–41; Bowman in CAH XII² 2005, 318f., and Palme in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 192–208. This reform seems to have been carried into effect by a committee, to which belonged, among others, a *rationalis* Claudius Marcellus and a *procurator Augustorum* Marcius Salutaris.
- 254 Petrus Patricius FHG IV 187, fig 9.
- 255 See Peachin 1991, 331–42 (Philip's march to Rome, spring to fall 244); Körner 2002, 92–8 (tombe and deification of Gordian III, Philip and the senate, Philip's march to Rome).
- 256 See Zosimus 1.19.2. Priscus is mentioned in CIL III 14149 = ILS 9005, from Philipopolis in Arabia: 'C.Iulio Prisco v.em., fratri et patruo dominorum nn.Philipporum Augg. et praefecto pr., rectorique Orientis Trebonius Sossianus primus pilus domo colonia Heliupoli d.n.m.q.e.' See Dobson 1978, 304, nr. 211. See Körner 2002, 55–9, 241–7; Sartre 2005, 347; Piso 2005, 53–5 and 393. P.Euphr.1 from Dura, AD 245, is a petition directed to Priscus. See Feissel-Gascou 1995, 73 (P. Euphr.1) and 80–2. See also Ando 2000, 73 (P. Euphr.1).
- 257 See Zosimus 1.19.2 who just mentions Moesia and Macedonia, no other provinces. On (Marcus Otacilius?) Severianus, brother of the emperor's wife Marcia Otacilia Severa, see Peachin 1996, 119f. See also Ando 2012, 117f.
- 258 See RIC IV 3, 72, nr. 30; 73, nr. 39; 75, nr. 64; 80, nr. 104; 92, nr. 196; 82–6, nrs. 115–47; 93–5, nrs. 198–212. An interesting piece is p. 72, nr. 30 (*antoninianus* from the mint of Rome), which shows the legend *De pia matre pius filius*, with busts of Otacilia Severa and her son Philip jr.
- 259 See Zosimus 1.20.1f. See Körner 2002, 134–55; Piso 2005, 51–9 (wars against Carpi and Goths). See RIC IV 3, 75, nr. 66 (*Victoria Carpica*). A recently found fragmentary inscription might suggest that Philip and his son (Philippus II) at a moment in 247 were personally present near Brigetio. See Borhy 2015, 25–42.
- 260 On this millenium festival see Eutropius 9.3 and Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 28.1. See De Blois 1978–1979, 19; Körner 2002, 248–59. This particular issue of coins was the largest and most costly of Philip's entire reign: 7 of the 33 *aurei* of the emperor and his family, 21 of the 158 silver coins, and 28 of the 171 bronze coins recorded in the RIC bear legends reminding anyone using coins of the Thousand Years celebrations of AD 248. See RIC IV 3, 68ff., nrs 12–24b, 107, 111, 116f., 158–164, 200a–202d, 224f., 264ab, 272 (Saeculares Aug.); 157a–c, 199a–c, 271 (Mil.Saec.S.C.); 25ab, 86ab, 108, 118, 244 (Saeculum novum); 44a–45, 65, 85, 106f., 140, 243, 251ab (Rome[e] Aeterna[e]); 37a, 38ab, 56, 95, 177–183, 230, 245, 266, 267ab (Liberalitas Aug.); 35ab, 36ab, 37ab, 175a–176c (Laetitia fundata).
- 261 Körner 2002, 211–31.
- 262 On Philip's reign see De Blois 1979, 11–43; Prickartz 1993, 129–53; Körner 2002, 30–210; Potter 2004, 236–41; Christol 2006a, 103–11; Huttner in Johnes *et al.*

- 2008, I, 189–8; Ando 2012, 115–21. The literary sources about Philip and his reign were assembled and analyzed by Körner; see idem 2002, 5–28. On Philip's imperial representation in inscriptions and on coins, and his imitation of Severan dynastic propaganda, see De Blois 1979, 34–40; Peachin 1990, 198–214 (titles in inscriptions and on coins); Körner 2002, 32–66, 99–119; Benoist in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 268. On Philip's images and legends on coinage, compared to other emperors ruling from AD 193 onwards see Manders 2012, 65, fig. 17 (military representation, 17 per cent of Philip's coin types); 100, fig.18 (divine associations, about 6 per cent of Philip's coin types); 159, fig.25 (virtues, 12 per cent of Philip's coin types); 190, fig.27 (golden age propaganda, about 27 per cent of Philip's coin types). So Philip produced relatively fewer coins with legends and images that were most popular throughout the century. He concentrated more on dynastic representation and his millennium.
- 263 In *HE* 6.34.1 Eusebius even pretends that Philip became a Christian, which is highly unlikely, and has not been corroborated by other sources.
- 264 On this oration see Swift 1966, 267–89 (translation into English with commentary); De Blois 1986, 279–88.
- 265 De Blois 1984, 377.
- 266 On the economy and society of the Roman Near East in the imperial period see Millar 1993, 225–488. There was not much decay there in the third and fourth centuries AD, only a tough period in the third quarter of the third century.
- 267 See below, ch. 4.4.
- 268 De Blois 2002, 206f.; idem 2006b, 26. On Maximinus' appointment policy see Haegemans 2010, 96–105. On the continuity of the Severan nucleus of the senate see Mennen 2011, 50–81.
- 269 Concise surveys of the period 248/9–268/270 are given by Watson 1999, 23–42; Potter 2004, 240–68; Drinkwater in *CAH*² XII 2005, 37–48; Christol 2006a, 117–63; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 198–221; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 223–307.
- 270 On Jotapianus see *PIR*² I 49; Körner 2002, 277–82; Kienast 2004, 202, and Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 198f.
- 271 On Pacatianus see *PIR*² C 929f., Mócsy 1974, 204f.; Körner 2002, 282–8; Kienast 2004, 201; Huttner, in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 199f.
- 272 Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 199.
- 273 Nasti 1997, 289.
- 274 See above, p. 63.
- 275 Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 200, referring to Iordanes, *Getica* 89. Cf. Drinkwater in *CAH* XII² 2005, 37.
- 276 Birley 1998, 59–67, esp. 66 (on Decius being governor of Hispania Tarraconensis under Maximinus).
- 277 On Decius, his life, and career see *PIR*² M 520; Kienast 2004, 204f.; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 37–56; Johnes *et al.* 2008, II, 1065 PU 6; Mennen 2011, 25.
- 278 Zosimus 1.21.2; Zonaras 12.19. See Körner 2002, 291; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 38f.
- 279 Zosimus 1.21.2–3; Zonaras 12.19. Lorient 1975, 795 dates this usurpation in May or June 249. The first trace of Decius as an emperor is *CJ* 10.16.3, 16 October 249. A second one is *P. Oxy.* 14, 1636 (28 November 249). It seems that in Moesia not all military units willingly went over to Decius. An inscription cited by Körner 2002, 296, might point at a refusal by some units to remove the images of the Philippi from their signs. See *AE* 1935, 164 (cf. *AE* 1949, 151; *AE* 1949, 201; *AE* 1976, 547), and Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 202.
- 280 Potter 2004, 241. See Zosimus 1.22.1f.; Zonaras 12.19. Cf. Eutropius 9.3; Epitome 28.2f. See Körner 2002, 305–22 (Philip's end); Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 202f.

- 281 See Birley 1998, 68–73; Peachin 1990, 239–52; Kienast 2004, 204f.
- 282 See Worp 2017, 247–60.
- 283 Potter 1990, 170 (text) and 171 (translation).
- 284 See Hekster 2015, 222f.
- 285 On Decius' *restitutor* titles see Babcock 1962, 147–58; Birley 1998, 75 (*restitutor sacrarum et libertatis*, in an inscription from Cosa in Italy, AE 1973, 235). See Christol 2006a, 121; Benoist in Quet 2006, 36. See ILS 8922 = CIL III 12351 (*reparator disciplinae militaris, fundator sacrae urbis, and firmator spei*). On Decius' representation on coins see Manders 2012, 160–70.
- 286 RIC IV 3, 130–2, nrs 77–98 (*antoniniani*). See Manders 2012, 253–67.
- 287 This was important in imperial representation. See Ando 2000, 206–10.
- 288 Gradel 2002, 349–69. On the decay of the traditional imperial cult in Spain after 235 see Richardson 1998, 251f.
- 289 See PIR V 8 (Valens Hostilianus), PIR² H 106 (Herennius Etruscus), and PIR² H 136 (Herennia Etruscilla). See Kienast 2004, 206–8.
- 290 RIC IV 3, 120, nr. 2; 124, nrs. 35a–37c (Dacia or Dacia Felix); 120, nrs 3f.; 121, nr. 9; 122, nrs 15–18; 124, nrs. 38a–40b (*genius Illyrici, genius exercitus Illyriciani*); RIC IV 3, 122f., nrs 20–26; 124, nr. 41 ab (Pannoniae, cf. RIC IV 3, 141, nr. 158, a coin issued in the name of Herennius Etruscus). See Manders 2012, 255–8.
- 291 Rives 1999, 137; Manders 2012, 253f.; Ando 2012, 134–40. On the *libelli* that testified that people had sacrificed see Knipfing 1923, 345–90.
- 292 On this persecution of Christians see Potter 1990, 261f.; idem 2004, 241–3; Rives 1999, 135–54; Clarke in CAH XII² 2005, 625–35; Christol 2006a, 120–2; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 46–9; Bleckmann in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 57–71; Pietzner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, II, 994ff. A first-hand description is given in a letter by bishop Dionysius of Alexandria, quoted by Eusebius, *HE* 6.41–43.
- 293 Drinkwater in CAH XII² 2005, 37 remarks: 'The first direct Gothic thrust into the Roman empire resulted from Philip's ending of subsidies to these people.' It is not certain, however, that groups of Gothic warriors did not yet join raids into Roman territory earlier. See Wolfram 1997, 44; Kulikowski 2007, 14–33; Goltz in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 456.
- 294 Dexippus, frg. 24 Martin (siege of Philippopolis); Dexippus in Codex Vindobonensis gr. 73 fols. 194 and 195, in Martin and Grusková 2014a, 734–6; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 29.2–5; Zosimus 1.23; Jordanes, *Getica* 101–3; Syncellus 459 (Dexippus frg. 17 Martin); Zonaras 12.20. There are also many hoards, which may be a symptom of turmoil and chaos; see Gerov 1977, 110–81, esp 147f. In the fourth century Ammianus Marcellinus found in his sources how serious this invasion had been; see Ammianus Marcellinus 31.5.15–16. In these passages his chronology is unfortunately not very accurate, and he may mix up events of this year and later invasions into the region.
- 295 Dexippus, frg. 23 Martin. Mecella 2006, 264f., argues that no Roman troops could have been within the walls of Philippopolis because Thrace was a province without troops. Such considerations belong to periods of peace, not to a time of invasions during which Roman troops could be everywhere to fight invading groups of warriors.
- 296 See Jordanes, *Getica* 103. See Martin and Grusková 2014a, 744.
- 297 See Grusková and Martin 2014, 29–43 and 2015, 35–53.
- 298 See Martin and Grusková 2014a, 743–8. I accept their reconstruction of events.
- 299 In 12.20 Zonaras tells us that Decius engaged plundering barbarians and killed many. When they were hard pressed and offered to surrender all their loot if they were allowed to withdraw, Decius did not give in, but posted Gallus, one of the men of the senate, on the route of the barbarians. Gallus, however, told the barbarians where best to attack the emperor. Zonaras (12.20) thinks that this happened in 'Bosporus,' which is impossible.

- 300 Drinkwater in CAH XII² 2005, 39.
- 301 *quos diuturnitas nimis validos ac prope incolas effecerat*. See Batty 2007, 388ff.
- 302 His name was Gaius Vibius Trebonianus Gallus. On his name, life, and career see PIR V 403; Kienast 2004, 209; Mennen 2011, 25.
- 303 See Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 30.1. On Volusianus and Hostilianus see PIR V 376 and PIR V 8; see Kienast 2004, 207 and 210.
- 304 Zosimus 1.24.2–25.2; Zonaras 12.21; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 212f.; Christol 2006a, 125. One of the later sources, Syncellus, mentions Dexippus as his source of information. See Syncellus 459: ‘The legions proclaimed as emperor a certain Gallus who had been previously consul, together with Decius’ son Volusianus. According to Dexippus, they also ruled for 18 months...’
- 305 See Peachin 1996, 120–3, referring to CIL VI 3836 (31747) from Rome.
- 306 On Gallus’ reign see Potter 2004, 246–52; Drinkwater in CAH XII² 2005, 39–41; Christol 2006a, 123–8; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 211–15.
- 307 See above, nn. 1, 2 (effects of the Antonine plague).
- 308 On the plague of 252 and its effects see Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 30.2; Orosius 7.21.5; 7.27.10; Zosimus 1.26.2. In *Oracula Sibyllina* 13, 106 it is briefly mentioned. See Lo Cascio 1997, 168ff.; Carrié and Rousselle 1999, 521ff., De Blois in idem and Lo Cascio 2007, 504, and Haas 2006, 84f. who thinks that all parts of the empire suffered from the plague, from east to west. A slight indication may be that Gallus began to honor the god Apollo Salutaris on some of his coins, see RIC IV 3, 160, nr. 5 and 161, nr. 19 (gold); 162, nr. 32 (*antoniniani*); 171, nrs. 103 and 104 ab (bronze). Cf. RIC IV 3, 188, nrs. 247f. (bronze, Volusianus).
- 309 Drinkwater 1989, 126; Mosig-Walburg 209, 43f. This Persian war started already in 252, not in 253. See Millar 1993, 159. Potter 2004, 248, thinks that this Persian war started under Decius, which is too early. Clifford Ando even dates it under Philip! See Ando 2012, 117.
- 310 See RGDS 4–9 (Hekster 2008, 113); *Oracula Sibyllina* 13, 89–136; Zosimus 1.27.2. See Kettenhofen 1982, 38–43 (Armenia, and Hormizd’s campaign); 50–2 (rapid Persian march along the Euphrates, passing by of fortresses such as Dura); 53 (battle at Barbalissos); 56–9 (Persian raids); 59–65 (first fall of Antioch, 253). See also Downey 1961, 255–9; Balty 1988, 102f.; Millar 1993, 159ff.; Dodgeon and Lieu 1994, 49–55; Mitchell 2001, 237; Potter 2004, 248–50; Christol 2006a, 126f., and 130 notes 14 and 15.
- 311 Anonymus Continuator Dionis *FHG* IV, 192, frg 1: ‘When the king of the Persians came before Antioch with Mareades, he encamped some 20 stadia from the city. The respectable classes fled the city but the majority of the populace remained; partly because they were well disposed towards Mareades and partly because they were glad of any revolution; such as is customary with ignorant people.’ On Mareades see PIR² M 273; Kienast 2004, 216f.
- 312 See the Nestorian chronicle of Se’ert, in PO IV, 222. Cf. De Blois 1976, 185 with note 43.
- 313 *summam potestatem corruptis militibus arripuit*.
- 314 On Aemilianus’ status, name, and career see PIR² A 330; Kienast 2004, 212; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 215–18; Mennen 2011, 25. On his military successes, his ensuing accession, and the demise of Gallus and his son see Eutropius 9.5f.; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 31.1; Epitome 31.1–3; Orosius 7.21.6; Zosimus 1.28.1–3; Iordanes, *Getica* 19, 105; Zonaras 12.21–22. Cf. *Oracula Sibyllina* 13.100–2; Ioannes Antiochenus *FHG* IV 598, 150. On Aemilianus’ reign see Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 216–18.
- 315 Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 215f.
- 316 Cosme in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 99. Cf. Balty 1987 and 1988.
- 317 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 32.1. Cf. Zosimus 1.29.1.

- 318 Anonymus Continuator Dionis *FHG* IV 193, frg 2. In the version of Zonaras 12.22 (591):

After he had thus been proclaimed emperor, Aemilianus wrote to the senate, promising that he would rid Thrace of barbarians, that he would campaign against Persia, and that, having turned the realm over to the senate, he would do everything and fight as their general.

- 319 On this usurpation see See Zosimus 1.29.1; Zon.12.22. On the dating of the events happening in the second half of 253 see Kienast 2004, 214ff.; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 223–33; Geiger 2013, 82–6.
- 320 See RIC V 1, 64f., nrs. 1–6 and 8–12, which are *consecratio* coins for Mariniana.
- 321 See PIR² L 258 (Valerian) and L 197 (Gallienus); Kienast 2004, 214–20; Christol 2006a, 131f.; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 223–9. Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 223, mention the 190s as Valerian's time of birth, but Kienast sticks to about 200. Kienast 2004, 218, referring to Epitome 33.3, maintains that Gallienus was born about 213, whereas Christol 2006a, 132, takes it for granted that he was born about 218–20. On the family of Valerian and Gallienus see Geiger 2013, 73–80 and 291–300 (on the empress Salonina, Gallienus' wife). Two Egnatii, father and son L. Egnatius Victor Lollianus, were important senators in the mid-third century. They may have been related to Gallienus and his mother. See Haensch 2007, 289–302; cf. SEG 44, 1994, 863. A good short survey of the eventful reigns of Valerian and Gallienus is given by Drinkwater in CAH XII² 2005, 41–8. More elaborate surveys are given by Christol 1975, 803–27; Kuhoff 1979, 11–35; Christol 2006a, 131–62; Potter 2004, 252–62; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 223–95; Geiger 2013, 82–199.
- 322 Potter 2004, 252–4. On Valerian's *restitutor* titles on coins and in inscriptions see Peachin 1990, 299 nr. 7, 300 nr. 16, 301 nr. 21 (*restitutor orbis*); 300 nr. 15 (*restitutor generis humani*); 300 nr. 17, 301 nr. 22 (*restitutor orientis*); 303 nr. 35 (*restitutor publicae securitatis ac libertatis conservator*). See RIC V 1, 42, nr. 50 (*restitutor orbis*, in gold); 47, nrs. 116–19 (the same, on *antoniniani*); 51, nrs. 171f. (*restitutor orbis s.c.*, in bronze); 55, nr. 220 (*restitutori generis humani*, on *antoniniani* from the mint of Viminacium).
- 323 See Peachin 1996, 124f.
- 324 See below, pp. 73, 75.
- 325 Christol 1978, 529–40. See Roueché 1989, 11–14, nrs 5–6, two inscriptions from Aphrodisias (AD 253–260) in which Marcus Aurelius Diogenes is honored. He was a governor of Phrygia-Caria, one of the two parts of Asia.
- 326 On Uranius Antoninus see Baldus 1971; Potter 1990, 323–8; idem 2004, 249f., in notes 146f. referring to Oracula Sibyllina 13.147–54 and Malalas 296, and Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 220f. There is some numismatic evidence for his imperial pretensions: RIC IV 3, 205f., 1–9 (in gold).
- 327 Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 235.
- 328 On the actions following the fall of Antioch see Kettenhofen 1982, 66–70 (Persian raids from Antioch); 70–5 (successful defense by Uranius Antoninus at Emesa); 74–6 (Persian withdrawal). See also Millar 1993, 159–63 and Ando 2012, 164–6.
- 329 AE 1957, 19 = SEG 17, 1960, 528. See Potter 1990, 330; Millar 1992, 390; idem 1993, 163; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 233 note 59. The reconstruction of Antioch: Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes 2008, I, 235.
- 330 Göbl 2000, 132–5; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 235.
- 331 Feissel-Gascou 1995, 106f.
- 332 P.Euphr.3–4, AD 252–6; Feissel-Gascou 1995, 102ff. On this mid-Euphrates region see Gascou in Eck 1999, 61–73. In AD 221 an earlier *praetentura* had been set up

- here, under a procuratorial *praepositus praetenturae*. In P.Dura 64 this *praepositus* is obliged to approvision Palmyrene detachments at Apadana.
- 333 Demougin in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 166.
- 334 See CIL VIII 22062–64.
- 335 See Devijver 1976, 400, G 2, referring to IRT 880 = AE 1950, 128.
- 336 See Polley 2007, 156–63: the usurpations of Sabinianus, AD 240 (CIL VI 1090), Celsus, about 260–268, and Domitius Alexander, c. 308–309. The latter two are uncertain, though.
- 337 See Gutsfeld in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 468f. On Marcus Aurelius Vitalis see PIR² A 1635.
- 338 See Kuhoff 1979, 11; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 215; Faure 2013, I, 96. See Burnand II 2006, 584–5, nr. 267 E 208, referring to CIL VIII 2634 (ILS 2296), from Lambaesis, about a Sathonius Iucundus, a *primus pilus* of the restored legion III Augusta, AD 255. In ILS 531 = CIL VIII 2482, a dedication to Valerian and Gallienus, this legion is called *legio III Augusta restituta*.
- 339 Gutsfeld in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 468f. On the *ala Thracum* see CIL VIII 20827 = ILS 3000. On Gargilius Martialis see Devijver 1976, 400f., G 4, referring to CIL VIII 9047 = 20736 = ILS 2767.
- 340 See Devijver 1976, 400f., G 4.
- 341 See Pflaum 1960, II, 905–23, referring to CIL VIII 21000; CIL VIII 21724; AE 1900, 125; AE 1907, 4 = ILS 9006; AE 1954, 136, and some other evidence. According to CIL VIII 21000 and 12296 (ILS 2774), Octavianus, an eques (*vir perfectissimus*), became *dux per Africam Numidiam Mauretianamque, praeses provinciae Mauretaniae Caesariensis*. He had fought the barbarians before, as a *praeses*. See Witschel in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 146–9, esp. 149. Octavianus had been a fleet commander. See AE 1907, 4 = ILS 9006: *Bavaribus [...] rebellibus et in priori praesidatu et postea in ducatu Marcus Cornelius Octavianus praefectus classis praetoriae Misenensis fecit agens gratias* . . . See Witschel in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 149.
- 342 CIL VIII 21486 = ILS 4495. See Dobson 1978, 312, nr. 220.
- 343 On Successianus see PIR² S 943; Johnes *et al.* 2008, II, 1072 PPO 11. See Kettenhofen 1982, 64–5 (Successianus with other high staff members in Antioch); Lorient in Quet 2006, 338.
- 344 Zosimus 1.33.1–3. See Mitchell 2001, 235; Nollé in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 279; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 236.
- 345 Zosimus 1.34–35 (unfortunately a chronologically not very accurate survey), and Zonaras 12.23. Cf. Eutropius 9.8.2; Orosius 7.22.7; Syncellus 467 (another chronologically confused passage); See Mitchell 2001, 235; Nollé in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 277–83; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 236, 247f.
- 346 Waddington 1910, 507, nr. 846. See Mitchell 2001, 213, 235; Nollé in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 280.
- 347 Zosimus 1.36.1. On Felix see PIR² F 142. He was an experienced man if he was the same Felix mentioned in Barbieri 1952, nr. 1113 (*consul ordinarius* in 237 and so possibly an old friend of Valerian). See De Blois 1976, 31 note 39; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes 2008, I, 248 note 138. Not much of him is known.
- 348 Drinkwater 1987, 100–3; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 238f.; Geiger 2013, 86–8.
- 349 Cf. Syncellus 466; Zonaras 12.23. On devastations in Pannonia see Alföldy 2011b, 195.
- 350 In chapter 466 Syncellus says: ‘During the rule of Valerian and Gallienus, the Scythians again crossed the Istros river and ravaged Thrace and besieged the Illyrian city of Thessalonike. But because of the courage of those guarding the city, they achieved nothing of great note against it.’ However, Mallan and Davenport argue that this must be a mistake, and that this happened about 262, in the first years of Gallienus’ sole reign. See Mallan and Davenport 2015, 217–20.

- 351 Drinkwater 1987, 103; Göbl 2000, 96; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 238; Geiger 2013, 206.
- 352 On imperial coins his *Victoriae Germanicae* were celebrated. See RIC V 1, 84, nrs. 194–6 (*antoniniani* from the mint of Rome, AD 254–256). See Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 238; Geiger 2013, 200ff. In 258, after Gallienus' successes, in Moesia Inferior a Publius Aelius Antonianus could restore the *porta praetoria* of the place where his cohort was based. He was a *tribunus cohortis III Collectae Valerianae Gallienae*. See Devijver 1976, 56, A 23, referring to CIL III 7450 = ILS 2622.
- 353 Gallienus' cavalry is explicitly mentioned by Cedrenus I 454. On Gallienus' new army, consisting of cavalry and infantry detachments, see Christol 1977, 393ff.; Simon 1980, 435–51; Le Bohec 1994, 198; Nicasie 1998, 36f.; Piso 2005, 392; Campbell in CAH XII, 2005, 115ff.; Cosme in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 103f.; idem 2009, 212–15; Geiger 2013, 322–8. Cosme, like Whitby 2004, 161f., seems to think that Gallienus developed his new army on the Rhine, but he must have done this earlier, on the Danube. On Gallienus' mobile army see also De Blois 1976, 26ff. One trusted high-ranking officer who served in this new army may have been Lucius Petronius Taurus Volusianus, a man who made a brilliant career under Gallienus. He came from Arretium in central Italy, not far from Gallienus' home region. See Devijver 1976, 639–41, P 30; Dobson 1978, 306–8, nr. 215; PIR² P 313; PLRE I Volusianus 6; Mennen 2011, 227–9.
- 354 Dexippus, frg. 23.6 Martin, a passage in a letter to the people of Philippopolis that Dexippus puts into the mouth of the emperor Decius. That this information comes from a rhetorical showpiece might diminish its value, but Dexippus could in those days not very well phantasmize about such important tangible details without jeopardizing his credibility. On this speech as a rhetorical exercise see Davenport and Mallan 2013, 57–73.
- 355 This tracking down of plundering enemies had been practiced before, under Marcus Aurelius, for example in Pannonia. Marcus Valerius Maximianus, an *eques* who made a long career mainly consisting of militarily important posts, was *praepositus equit(um) Afror(um) et Mauror(um)/ elector(um) ad curam explorationis Pannoniae* under this emperor. See AE 1956, 124; Pflaum 1960, I, 476ff., nr. 181 bis; Alföldy 1974b, 204.
- 356 Such a combination of *vexillationes* and *equites*, operated in southern Gaul under Claudius II, just after Gallienus' sole reign. It was commanded by Placidianus. See ILS 569 = CIL XII 2228. They may have reconquered Gallia Narbonensis for the 'central' empire.
- 357 See Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 33.6; Epitome 33.1; HA *Gallienus* 21.3. See Speidel, M.P. in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 74f., referring to PLRE I 123 (Attalus), and PLRE I 702 (Pipa). See Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 117; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 239; Mennen 2011, 219; Geiger 2013, 333. Kuhoff 1979, 18 argues that Pipa was just a hostage, not a concubine, because the literary sources exaggerated her position to blacken Gallienus' character. In the circumstances of about 260 this is not very probable. Gallienus was not in a position to demand any hostages.
- 358 See Speidel, M.P., in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 74f. On Pannonia and its development see Alföldy 2011b, 161–99. The economic and logistical significance of the part of Pannonia which is modern western Hungary is made clear also by an archeological map drawn by Henning 1987, 23.
- 359 On Aureolus see PIR² A 1672; Kienast 2004, 228f.
- 360 RIC V 1, 169, nrs. 445f. (Fidei Equitum, mint of Milan). The mint of Milan also produced coins carrying the legends Concordia Equitum (RIC V 1, nr. 472), Fid(ei) Praet(orianorum) (RIC V 1, nr. 476), Fidei Legionum (RIC V 1, 172, nrs. 477 and 479), and Fidei Exercitus VIII (RIC V 1, 173, nr. 478). See also Göbl 2000, 67 (synopsis) and 99–118 (mint of Milan). See Alföldy 1967, 8f.; Nicasie 1998, 37. Drinkwater 1987, 103 points out that in these years the rise of Milan to one of the imperial capitals was beginning.

- 361 RIC V 1, 92–7, nrs 314–72 (*antoniniani* from the mint of Milan). See Le Bohec 1994, 197; Göbl 2000, 106f.; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 278f. with note 251; Geiger 2013, 211–14.
- 362 See Stoll 2001, 443ff.
- 363 Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 238 note 85. See Reuter 2007, 77–149.
- 364 Drinkwater 2007, 127.
- 365 Drinkwater 2007, 52.
- 366 Le Bohec 2008, 297ff.; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 243.
- 367 On the Franks see Hiddink 1999, 224f.; Taayke 2003, 1–13; Seebold 2003, 31–3; Cosme 2009, 206.
- 368 See Drinkwater 1987, 103. Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 240 note 96 convincingly argue that the younger Valerian was appointed *caesar* between 29 August and 27 October 256. After 15 February 258 (P. Oxy 1717) the younger Valerian is no longer mentioned in the dating formulas of papyrus texts, but Saloninus is (P. Oxy 2560, 25 July 258). See Christol 2006a, 139. Valerian the Younger was commemorated on *consacratio* coins in gold, silver, and bronze, see RIC V 1, 116, nr. 7 (gold); 117, nrs. 8–10 (*antoniniani*); 118f., nrs. 24–28 (*antoniniani*); 119–21, nrs. 31, 35, 41–3 (bronze).
- 369 Christol 2006a, 139.
- 370 Kettenhofen 1982, 77–83. According to Gascou (in Eck 1999, 67, referring to P. Dura 64), a *praetentura* had been in existence here since 221, ruled by a *praepositus praetenturae*. On the fall of Dura in 256 see Gascou in Eck 1999, 71; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 237.
- 371 See Cyprian, Epist. 80.2; Eusebius, HE 7.13.
- 372 Potter 1990, 330.
- 373 See Roueché 1989, 4–8, nr. 1, a fragmentary letter of Valerian and Gallienus apparently written from Cologne, dated 23 August. See Millar 1993, 164, note 22; Eck in De Blois *et al.* 2003, 290; idem in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 34f. (where he guesses that Valerian went to Cologne twice, in 256 and 258, which is not probable within the chronology of the years 256–260); Christol 2006a, 136; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 238 note 84; Geiger 2013, 88–90.
- 374 See CIL XIII 8261; Roueché 1989, 7.
- 375 Göbl 2000, 99. See also Drinkwater 1987, 103; Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 34f.; Geiger 2013, 206. See also Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 243;
- 376 Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 35.
- 377 RIC V 1, 39, nr. 7; Göbl 2000, nr. 867 a and e; Geiger 2013, 207.
- 378 Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 243; Manders 2012, 274. See RIC V 1, 68, nrs. 2f.; 71f., nrs. 39–52; 76, nrs. 95–8; 82f., nrs. 173–180; 87, nr. 245; 90, nr. 285; 99–102, nrs. 404, 406, 429; 104, nrs. 451f. (Victoria Germanica); 69f., nrs. 17–19 and 72, nr. 60 (Germanicus Maximus V, on *antoniniani* from the mint of Cologne, AD 258–259); 70f., nrs. 27–35 (Restitutor Galliarum, on *antoniniani* from the mint of Cologne, AD 258); 81, nrs. 141f. (Germanicus Maximus ter, on *antoniniani* from the mint of Rome, AD 255–257); 382f., nr. 257 (Germanicus Maximus).
- 379 Eck in De Blois *et al.* 2003, 291; idem in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 36f.
- 380 On detachments from Britain in Pannonia see ILS 546 = CIL III 3228: ‘Iovi Monitori pro salute atque incolumitate d.n. Gallieni Aug. et militum vexillationum legionum Germanicarum et Britannicarum cum auxiliis earum ... Vitalianus protector Aug. praepositus votum posuit.’ See Keppie in Le Bohec 2000, 34. More units from Britain may have served at the Danube border. See Birley in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 49. In 267 a Marcus Bellicius Saturninus, *tribunus cohortis I Flaviae Brittonum*, was involved in fighting against the Goths. *Cohors II Flavia Brittonum* may have served at the Danube border earlier, under Severus Alexander. In CIL III 7473 from Moesia Inferior it is called *Alexandriana*. See Devijver 1976, 181, B 19, 731, S 28. There is always the possibility, however, that such units had maintained their name, but did no longer consist of British soldiers.

- 381 Hekster 2008, 113. See Huyse and Lorient in Quet 2006, 322–40.
- 382 Ziegler 1993, 153f.; Butcher 2004, 49, 261–4; Nollé in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 284.
- 383 RIC V 1, 39, nr. 22; 58, nr. 262; 60, nr. 291 (Victoria Parthica); 60, nr. 286 (Restitutor Orientis). See Alföldi 1967, 125ff.; 145; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 237 with note 82. See Hartmann 2001, 130, with note 6; Drinkwater in CAH XII² 2005, 42.
- 384 RGDS 9 (Hekster 2008, 113). Cf. Millar 193, 166. In 1.36.1–2 Zosimus tells us: ‘Valerian had by this time heard of the disturbances in Bithynia, but he dared not to confide the defense of it to any of his generals through distrust. He therefore sent Felix to Byzantium, and went in person from Antioch to Cappadocia, and he returned after he had done some injury to every city through which he passed. But the plague then attacked his troops, and destroyed most of them, at the time when Shapur made an attempt upon the east, and reduced most of it to subjection. 2. In the meantime, Valerian became so weak that he despaired of ever recovering from the present sad state of affairs, and tried to conclude the war by a gift of money.’
- 385 Petrus Patricius, *FHG* IV 187, frg 9.
- 386 Iggereth Rav Sherira Gaon 82, ed. Lewin (Hebr.), ll. 9ff.: ‘And in the year 570 [Seleucid era, equivalent to AD 259, LdB] Papa ben Natzer [Odaenathus] came and destroyed Nehardea and Rabba ben Aouha, our ancestor, went to Sechansiv and to Sihe [and] to Mahoza. And Rav Joseph ben Hama, Rava’s father, was there. [And the rest of] our sages [went] to Pumbedita [Peroz-Shapur], which from the day of the Second Temple was the chief exile, as we learned from Rosh ha-Shanah.’ See Dodgeon and Lieu 1994, 70. See De Blois 1975, 12–15. Neusner 1966, 48f., believes that the date should be altered to 262 or 263. Hartmann 2001, 100, says that there are no indications for any military actions by Odaenathus against the Persians before 260, and on p. 169 assumes that Nehardea was destroyed in 262, at the time of Odaenathus’ march to Ctesiphon. In my view they are both wrong. There is no reason to reject the date given in the letter.
- 387 See IGR III 1031 (April 258). See Kettenhofen 1982, 123; Millar 1993, 162, 165; Millar in Cotton and Rogers 2006, 256ff.; Long in Mathisen and Sivan 1996, 61; Hartmann 2001, 102ff.; idem in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 349. Hartmann 2001, 105ff. makes clear that Odaenathus was not a governor of Syria in those years. On Odaenathus and his family see Hartmann 2001, 86–102, 108–27.
- 388 On the ending of local coinage in the eastern provinces under Valerian see Butcher 2004, 49, 261–4; Lo Cascio in CAH XII² 2005, 162 (who dates this measure between mid-century and Aurelian); Nollé in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 284; Stoll in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 460.
- 389 See ch. 3, pp. 154f.
- 390 Zonaras 12.23. Being on the crossroads of important ways, Edessa was of great strategic and logistical importance. See Ross 2001, 27f. Samosata was another strong bulwark in the region. See Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 235.
- 391 A similar story about treacherous behavior had been told about Philip the Arab betraying Gordian III. Such stories are *loci communes* explaining why Roman emperors were going down. They could not simply be defeated by a superior enemy. To admit that such a thing could happen would undermine the imperial victory ideology.
- 392 RGDS 11 (Hekster 2008, 113). Cf. Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 5; Julianus, *Caesares* 313C; Eutropius 9.7; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 32.5; Epitome 32, 5f.; Festus 23; Zosimus 1.36.1f.
- 393 Lactantius revealed in the shameful treatment Valerian had to endure in Persian captivity. In *De mortibus persecutorum* 5.3 he tells us that Shapur used to command Valerian to bend over and show his back whenever he wanted to step onto his carriage or mount his horse and, having placed his foot on Valerian’s back, said reproaching him

- with a smile, that this was the truth, and not the things which the Romans depicted on boards and plaster (see Hekster 2008, 114).
- 394 Cf. P.Strasb.1.6.27, mentioned by Christol 2006a, 141.
- 395 See Kuhoff 1979, 16, referring to CL XIII 5203.
- 396 See König 1981, 27ff.
- 397 On this much-debated chronological problem see König 1981, 20–31; Potter 1990, 332f.; Hartmann 2001, 131. Christol 2006a, 141; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 248f.; Geiger 2013, 93 note 585. Hartmann 2001, 131, note 11, opts for June or July 260, which may be too late. In July the news had already reached Rome, where the Christians elected a new bishop after Valerian's persecution had been stopped by Gallienus.
- 398 Drinkwater 2007, 70. On these invasions see König 1981, 36–42; Wolfram 1997, 45–8; Luther in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 325f. This invasion into Italy took place in 259. See Jehne 1996, 185–206; Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 28.
- 399 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 33.3; Orosius 7.22.8. Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 243 note 113, leave it open whether this expedition took place either in 256–257 or in 259–260.
- 400 See Bowman and Thomas 1994, nrs 154–5; Rossignol 2003, 365. In Vindolanda in one case 456 of nominally 725 were absent.
- 401 This practice of taking away *vexillationes*, in existence since the days of Marcus Aurelius, even entered into career-inscriptions. In CIL X 3345, second quarter of the third century, Marcus Verecundinius Verus is described as – among others – *primipilaris reliquationis classis praetoriae Misenatis*, i.e. of the part that stayed behind at Misenum. See Dobson 1978, 323, nr. 236; Burnand 2006, II, 563, nr. 257 E 200; Devijver 1976, 56, A 22. See also Dobson 1978, 301, nr. 205: C. Sulgius Caecilianus, Tuccabor (Afr.), ILS 2764= CIL VIII 14854. He made a long military career. He was *optio peregrinorum et exercitatorum militum frumentariorum, nauarchus classis praetoriae Misenatium piae vindicis*, centurio in the legions III Augusta, VII Gemina, I Parthica, XVI Flavia Firma, XIII Gemina, *praepositus reliquationi classis praetoriae Misenatium piae vindicis et thesauris dominicis et bastagis copiarum devehendarum, primus pilus* in the legion XX Valeria Victrix, and *praefectus legionis III Cyrenaicae*. P. Aelius Antipater Marcellus, an *eques Romanus* and (before?) a *decurio coloniae Apuli* (Dacia), had been prefect of two legions, VII Claudia and I Adiutrix, that is, of two vexillations taken from those units. See PIR² 21, nr. 139.
- 402 See above, p. 71, n316.
- 403 Eutropius 9.7; Orosius 7.22.7. See Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 244f.
- 404 See Zosimus 1.37.2: Gallienus being north of the Alps, fighting Germans, the senate had no other option than arming troops that happened to be in Rome, and raising an emergency militia. This combined force kept the barbarians from Rome, but the latter continued pillaging Italy.
- 405 Drinkwater 1987, 103; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 245.
- 406 In October 259, the date of P.Ryl.II 110 from Hermopolis, Valerian, Gallienus, and Saloninus were all three *augusti*. On Marcus Cassianus Latinus Postumus see PIR² C 466; PLRE I 720, nr. 2; Burnand II 2006, 571–9; Johnes *et al.* 2008, II, 1125f., and Mennen 2011, 220 note 106. On his names and titles see CIL XIII 8883; Drinkwater 1987, 125f.; 167; Kienast 2004, 243f. Of his preceding career little is known. He may have been *dux ripae* or *dux limitis*, but probably had a more important command. On Silvanus see PIR² S 737; Johnes 2008, II, 1075 PPO 23a; Mennen 2011, 32, 220 note 108, 267. He may have been Saloninus' praetorian prefect.
- 407 A translation into English is given by Hekster 2008, 117. On this famous inscription and Genialis' victory see Bakker 1993, 369–86; Strobel 1998, 83–93; Mackensen 1999, 200f.; Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 28; Drinkwater 2007, 53–7 who is dating

- Genialis' victory to April 261, not 260, though not on good grounds; Postumus' first consulate, mentioned in this inscription, was in 260, not in 261. Geiger 2013, 114, also opts for 261, not on good grounds either. On Genialis see Burnand II 2006, 586, nr. 268 E 209, s.v. M.Simplicinius Genialis.
- 408 On the events of 260–261 after Valerian's defeat see Christol 2006a, 143f.; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 255–65; Mennen 2011, 216–27.
- 409 See Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 33.2 (Ingenuus and Regalianus); Eutropius 9.8.1; Orosius 7.22.10; Zonaras 12.24 (Ingenuus). On Ingenuus see PIR² I 23; PLRE 457 nr. 1; Kienast 2004, 223; Mennen 2011, 217f. On Regalianus see Kienast 2004, 223f.; Mennen 2011, 218f. On both Ingenuus and Regalianus see Fitz 1965; Drinkwater 1987, 103ff.; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 263–5; Geiger 2013, 103–7. Ingenuus did not leave any coinage to us but Regalianus did: RIC V 2, 586f., nrs. 1–8 (from Carnuntum). See also Göbl 2000, 139. So did his wife Dryantilla: RIC V 2, 588, nrs. 1–2 and Göbl 2000, 139. There are traces of anti-Gallienic usurpations, either by Ingenuus and Regalianus or by Macrianus, one year later, in epigraphic texts. In CIL III 7450 = ILS 2622, AD 258, we read about a P. Aelius Antonianus, *tribunus cohortis III Collectae Valerianae Gallienae*. The names of the two emperors were erased later on. See Devijver 1976, 56, A 23. On the loss of Dacia see Eutropius 9.8.2; Orosius 7.22.7. Maybe these two literary sources, biased as they are against Gallienus, exaggerate what was going on in that province, but just a few years later the emperor Aurelian estimated the situation beyond repair and evacuated Dacia. See below, p. 89.
- 410 On this usurpation of power in the west see Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 33.8; Zosimus 1.38.2; Zonaras 12.24. See König 1981, 43–51; Drinkwater 1987, 23ff.; Eck in De Blois *et al.* 2003, 292ff.; idem in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 37–9; Christol 2006a, 141–3; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 262; Luther in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 327f.; Geiger 2013, 157f.
- 411 Drinkwater 1987, 27, 241f. On Gallienus and Postumus see the survey in Watson 1999, 33–7, and Geiger 2013, 159–71. The Anonymus Continuator Dionis, *FHG* IV, 194–5 fig 6, gives the impression that Postumus considered ruling and defending the Gauls his main task. Like other emperors Postumus named military units after himself. See RIB 1882 = CIL VII 821; RIB 1883 = CIL VII 820 = ILS 2553 (*cohors I Aelia Dacorum Postumiana cui praeest Marcius Gallicus, tribunus*); RIB 1886 = CIL VII 822 add. (*cohors I Aelia Dacorum Postumiana cui praeest Probius Augendus, tribunus*). See Devijver 1976, 562, M 28 and 681, P 108. Under Tetricus this cohort was called *cohors I Aelia Dacorum Tetricianorum* (RIB 1885 = CIL VII 823). That Britain also opted for Postumus is certain. Postumus' successor was governor there, as is attested by five milestones. See Birley 2005, 364f.; idem in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 49f.
- 412 See RIC V 2, 342, nrs. 64–8; 345–65, nrs. 98f., 130–9, 200–2, 272–5, 305–7, 340–53. RIC V 1 124 nr. 15 is a *consecratio* coin for Saloninus.
- 413 See König 1981, 36f.; 40f. (Vindonissa). On the concentration of troops at Milan to stop Postumus see Zosimus 1.40.1.
- 414 HA *Gallienus* 4.4; Zonaras 12.24. See Geiger 2013, 167–9. Greece was attacked as well; see Mallan and Davenport 2015, 217–21.
- 415 *Municipes* from Raetia honored Gallienus about 267. By then they would have been under his rule for a while. See CIL III 3424 = ILS 545: 'Genio imperatoris Publici Licinii Gallieni invicti Augusti Clementius Silvius vir egregius agens vice praesidis et Valerius Marcellinus praefectus legionis protector Augusti nostri agens vice legati, municipes ex provincia Raetia solverunt.' See Dobson 1978, 311, nr. 219.
- 416 See Okamura in Mathisen and Sivan 1996, 12–16; Mackensen 1999, 201; Drinkwater 2007, 52.

- 417 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 33.17. See Simon 1980, 439f. Under Marcus Aurelius there had been a *praetentura Italiae et Alpium*. See Alföldy 1974c, 153 and Cosme 2009, 210–11, referring to ILS 8977.
- 418 See ILS 544 = CIL V 3329 (Verona). Like Verona, Milan was probably called *colonia Gallieniana* (CIL V 5869 = ILS 6730). On the fortification of these places see Goltz and Hartmann in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 279.
- 419 See Kettenhofen 1982, 106–8; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 44ff.; Ando 2012, 167ff.
- 420 See Downey 1961, 261; Kettenhofen 1982, 102f.; Millar 1993, 166.
- 421 Zonaras 12.23. After some brave and heavy fighting Caesarea was betrayed to the Persians, and Demosthenes had to flee.
- 422 HA *Gallienus* 1.2 en 2.1: Ballista and Macrianus assemble *reliquiae* of the Roman armies and begin to resist. According to the Anonymus Continuator Dionis FHG IV, 193, frg 3, Macrianus refused to send help to Valerian and awaited the outcome of his battle against the Persians. In 466 Syncellus tells us: ‘At that time, the Persians, through their greed, were scattered in different places, and as they were on the verge of Pompeiopolis Maritima, and were plundering Lykaonia, they were destroyed in very large numbers, when Ballista, the Roman general whom the Romans had made their leader while in flight, launched an unexpected naval attack against them with his forces. After seizing Sapoires’ concubines and a great deal of wealth, he departed with his fleet to Sebaste and Korykos, where he killed 3000 Persians.’ On Macrianus and Ballista see Kettenhofen 1982, 109ff.; Goltz and Hartmann in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 257–9; Mennen 2011, 223–6; Geiger 2013, 120–5. Ballista: PIR² B 41; PLRE I 146; Kienast 2004, 227; Johné *et al.* 2008, II, 1073 PPO 14. Macrianus and his sons: PIR² F 546, 547, and 549; Kienast 2004, 224ff. There is some numismatic evidence for the imperial pretensions of Macrianus jr and Quietus: RIC V 2, 580f., nrs. 1–14 (Macrianus) and 582f., nrs. 1–13 (Quietus). See also Göbl 2000, 143f.
- 423 Festus 23; Orosius 7.22.12; Oracula Sibyllina 13, 164ff. See Potter 1990, 341ff.; Hartmann 2001, 138f.; idem in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 350; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 49f.
- 424 See Long in Mathisen and Sivan 1996, 61–3; Hartmann 2001, 190–3; Millar in Cotton and Rogers 2006, 256–61; Paschoud 2009, 141–9, esp. 143.
- 425 CISem II 3971 (titles king of kings and *corrector* of the entire orient of Odaenathus’ successor Vaballathus, modeled upon those of his predecessor). See Drijvers 1977, 849; Millar 1993, 170f.; Hartmann 2001, 146–61, 162f.; idem in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 350ff.; Geiger 2013, 128–33.
- 426 On Musius Aemilianus see Pflaum 1960, II, 925–7 nr. 349; PIR² M 757; PLRE I, Aemilianus nr. 6; Devijver 1976, 587, M 77; Kienast 2004, 227f.; Mennen 2011, 148, 226. On his usurpation and downfall see Geiger 2013, 125f. Aemilianus had made an equestrian, procuratorial career. According to P. Oxy. IX 1201 ll.1–4 and 12–22, he was a *vir perfectissimus praefectus Aegypti* on 24 September 258. After having gone through *quattuor militiae* he had been appointed *praefectus vehiculorum* of the three Gallic provinces during the reign of Philip; then he had held the position of *procurator* of the three Egyptian ports, Alexandria, Pelusium, and Paraetionum, and subsequently of the two ports near Ostia, still under Philip (Mennen 2011, 148). Under Valerian and Gallienus he had become *subpraefectus* and subsequently *praefectus* of Egypt (257–261).
- 427 Epitome 32.4; HA *Gallienus* 4.1f., 5.6; HA *Trg. Tyr.* 22.4, 22.8, 26.4. See Mennen 2011, 148. On plague and civil strife in Alexandria in Egypt under Aemilianus see Eusebius *HE* 7.21–22. On Memor see PIR² M 490; PLRE I 594; Anonymus Continuator Dionis FHG IV, 193f. frg 4; Zosimus 1.38.1. On both Theodotus and Memor see Goltz and Hartmann in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 269 note 221; Geiger 2013, 127f., and Mennen 2011, 226. In note 139 on that page she points out that Theodotus in P. Strasb. 1.5 is attested as prefect of Egypt from July/ September 262 onwards (cf. P. Oxy. 12, 1467; 17, 2107).

- 428 See Ruffing in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 234f. There are traces of military activity and unrest in Egypt about AD 258–264 in several papyrus texts: P. Oxy 9.1194 and 46.3292; BGU 3.935; P. Princ. 3.29.
- 429 Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 265f.
- 430 See Eusebius, *HE* 7.13 and 23. On Gallienus discontinuing the persecution of the Christians see De Blois 1976, 177f.; Geiger 2013, 283–90.
- 431 On these *protectores* see Christol 1977, 394–408; Cosme 2009, 234; Mennen 2011, 227–31.
- 432 See CIL XIV 5334 (Ostia, Gallienus' sole reign, about 262): 'Invicto Gallieno exsuperantissimo Augusto, protectori imperii Romani omniumque salutis ... universi cives Ostienses decennii voti compotes.' See Christol in Quet 2006, 108–18.
- 433 On Gallienus' reforms see De Blois 1976, 23–119 and Geiger 2013, 314–32 (administrative, financial, and military policy), and De Blois 1976, 120–69 (conception of emperorship). On Gallienus and his officers see Mennen 2011, 216–40. On Gallienus' ideology and imperial representation, especially on coins, see De Blois 1976, 120–74; Manders 2012, 269–97 and Geiger 2013, 200–47. See below, ch. V, pp. 244–5. Göbl 2000, 94 mentions the so-called 'animal series,' coins showing animals representing patron deities.
- 434 Christol in Quet 2006, 119–27.
- 435 See RIC V 2, 358, nrs 261–5 (Juppiter, Hercules, Mars, Victoria, Apollo, Diana, and Serapis). See Grandvallet in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 337–51, esp. 347. On Postumus' *imitatio Gallieni* see Göbl 2000, 109f. Postumus also saw to it that he could produce coins that were better and more beautiful than those of his adversary Gallienus. He may have used experienced craftsmen from Viminacium and from Greek local mints to produce his coinage. See De Blois 1976, 201. According to Göbl 2000, 99, mid 257 the mint of Viminacium had been moved to Cologne.
- 436 See RIC V 1, 105, nrs 1f. (Pietas Faleri, on a gold medallion from the mint of Rome of Gallienus and Salonina from the joint reign with his father); 183 nr. 596: Virtus Faleri with a quiver, bow, club and lion's skin (the latter two being symbols of Hercules). See Manders 2012, 178, 295.
- 437 Panegyrici Latini 8.10.1–3.
- 438 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 33; Eutropius 8.1; HA *Gallienus* 1–18 *passim*.
- 439 On the history of the period 262–268 see Drinkwater in CAH XII² 2005, 46f.; Christol 2006a, 152–62; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 268–95.
- 440 Iordanes, *Getica* 107f. (the three kings). See Geiger 2013, 138–42. See also Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 269, 276f.; on p. 277 they suggest that Gallienus actively helped to restore cities in the destroyed area. In 262, probably after his *decennalia*, Gallienus established a mint at Siscia, undoubtedly to provide the money for his armies in the Balkans and northwest Asia Minor. See Göbl 2000, 118.
- 441 HA *Gallienus* 4.7f., 6.2, 7.3, 11.1, 12.6. See; Goltz and Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 276f. Sardes may temporarily have become the seat of the governor instead of destroyed Ephesus, see Robert 1948, 38.
- 442 Mallan and Davenport 2015, 203–26. They refer to Zosimus 1.29; Syncellus 466; HA *Gallienus* 5.6 and 6.1; FGrH 101 (Eusebius) frg. 1, and to the text of the new Dexippus fragment, codex Vindobonensis hist. gr. 73, folios 192v and 193r. They give the Greek text and a translation into English of the new Dexippus fragment, and demonstrate that it is indeed part of Dexippus' *Scythica*. The text of the new fragment was published earlier, by Martin and Grusková 2014b, 106f.
- 443 That Marianus is not the same man as Marcianus, is shown by Mallan and Davenport 2015, 210–12.
- 444 See Grusková and Martin in Eich, A., 2017, 267–79. In 480 BC Spartan warriors manned the Thermopylae passes to stop the Persian invaders.

- 445 See above, p. 73.
- 446 In 21.16.9–10 Ammianus Marcellinus tells us that Gallienus was the object of many genuine plots of traitors, such as Aureolus, Postumus, Ingenuus, Valens surnamed Thessalonicus, and several others, and yet often showed leniency in punishing crimes which would bring death to the victim; but he also tried to make false or doubtful cases appear well-founded by excessively violent tortures.
- 447 See below, ch. 5, pp. 237f.
- 448 HA *Gallienus* 7.1; Trg Tyr 6.1f. See Drinkwater 1987, 31. According to Speidel, M.P., in Johne *et al.* 2006, 73 with note 1, they may have been recruited already by Gallienus, before 260.
- 449 On this campaign see De Blois 1976, 7; Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 38–40; Goltz and Hartmann in Johne *et al.* 2008, I, 274, who date this expedition to 266–267, though not on good grounds. See Drinkwater 1987, 105f.; Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 40.
- 450 Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 39f.
- 451 De Blois 1976, 146; Goltz and Hartmann in Johne *et al.* 2008, I, 272.
- 452 See De Blois 1989, 81; idem 1994, 172; Goltz and Hartmann in Johne *et al.* 2008, I, 273.
- 453 Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 12. See De Blois 1989 and 1994. See Geiger 2013, 271–3.
- 454 On this war see Goltz and Hartmann in Johne *et al.* 2008, I, 283–7; Geiger 2013, 145–51. In 267 Gallienus established a mint at Cyzicus, which shows that this region was witnessing a great war again, which demanded imperial presence. See Göbl 2000, 122–7 (mint of Cyzicus). This mint went on working under Claudius II.
- 455 The *Historia Augusta* is of value here because when writing about the northwestern and Pontic parts of Asia Minor, Greece, and other Balkanic regions the author of the *Historia Augusta* is probably following Dexippus, whose *Scythica* concentrated on these territories. Dexippus is explicitly mentioned in HA *Gallienus* 13.8.
- 456 See Millar in Cotton and Rogers II 2004, 292f.; Mennen 2011, 233.
- 457 See IG II² 5199 and 5200 (texts on two *statuae* dedicated by the city of Athens); see Di Branco in De Ligt *et al.* 2004, 373–88, esp. 373–4.
- 458 See Mecella 2006, 53–7 who argues against skepticism about this event.
- 459 See HA *Gallienus* 13.8. Dexippus was honored at Athens: see IG II² 3669 (translated from the Greek by Hekster 2008, 116). Like his Boeotian namesake in 262, he held an adhortative speech before his men. See Dexippus, frg. 25 Martin (Hekster 2008, 115f.). See Mennen 2011, 233.
- 460 Potter 2006, 161.
- 461 See Syncellus 467. Cf. Zosimus 1.39.1.
- 462 See HA *Gallienus* 6.1f.; HA *Claudius* 6.1; Zosimus 1.40.1f. On the *dux* Marcianus see PIR I² M 204. See IGBulg V 5409 = AE 1965, 114 (Philippopolis). See Dobson 1978, 309f., nr. 217; Hartmann in Johne *et al.* 2006, 84f. note 10. He was one of Gallienus' *protectores*.
- 463 Hartmann in Johne *et al.* 2006, 84.
- 464 See the way in which Zonaras 12.26 mixes up what he must have found in his sources, telling us that barbarians vainly besieged Thessalonica, and then went to Athens, where they were attacked and beaten by Cleodamus, and in this way combining events from different periods of Gallienus' reign. According to Zonaras, this Cleodemus (sic!) was an Athenian. See Mecella 2006, 57f. A similar disorderly *summa summarum* is given by Syncellus 466–7 and also by Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 33.3.
- 465 Syncellus 467: 'The emperor Gallienus had also launched an attack and killed 3000 near Nessos. Then Naulobatus, the leader of the Ailouroi, unconditionally surrendered himself to the emperor and was honored by him with the rank of consul.' See Geiger 2013, 335.

- 466 For this story see Anonymus Continuator Dionis, FHG IV, 196, frg 9.
- 467 See Long in Mathisen and Sivan 1996, 61ff.; Hartmann 2001, 190–3; Millar in Cotton and Rogers III, 2006, 256–61.
- 468 Hartmann 2001, 217f. On Odaenathus' campaigns see Festus 23; Eutropius 9.10; Hieronymus, Chron.s.a.266, p. 211, 10–12; HA *Gallienus* 10.1–8; Orosius 7.22.12; Zosimus 1.39.1f. See Hartmann 2001, 162–73 (campaign of 262–263), 211ff. (second campaign and fighting against invading tribes); idem in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 353–6. Cf. Kettenhofen 1982, 125.
- 469 Hartmann 2001, 174.
- 470 Festus 23; Orosius 7.22.12. On Odaenathus' army see Hartmann 2001, 163.
- 471 FHG IV p. 195 frg 7. See Hartmann in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 357; Geiger 2013, 134–7. According to Sartre 2005, 355, Odaenathus and his son Hairan were killed between 30 August 267 and 29 August 268.
- 472 On Heraclianus' 'eastern campaign' see Hartmann 2001, 260f. (rightfully skeptical). On Heraclianus himself see Hartmann in Johné *et al.* 2006, 102 n.52, referring to IGBulg III 2, 1568 = AE 1948, 55: 'agathêi tuchêi/ ton exochôta/ton eparchon/ tou hierou prai/ tôriou Aurêlion/ Hêraklianon/ Moukianos ton/ euergetên/ eutuchôs.' Cf. IGBulg III 2, 1569: 'Agathêi tuchêi/ ton diasêmotaton/ hêgoumenon [tês]/ eparchias Markon Aurêlion/ Apollinarian adel/ phon tou exochôta/tou eparchou [tou]/ hierou praitôriou/ Moukianos ...' (AD 267). Apollonarius was Heraclianus' brother. See also PLRE I, Heraclianus 6; Christol 1977, 398–400; Johné *et al.* 2008, II, 1073 PPO 15; Mennen 2011, 162, 232.
- 473 The word *necessarius* is used in HA *Niger* 3.5 to describe Pescennius Niger as an able military man. On Aureolus' rebellion, the battle at Pontirolo, the conspiracy against Gallienus and the latter's death see Eutropius 9.11; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 33.15–30; HA *Gallienus* 14–15; Orosius 7.22.13; Zosimus 1.40.1–3; Zonaras 12.25–26. See De Blois 1976, 7; Hartmann in Johné *et al.* 2006, 85f., 88–100 (evidence), 100–118 (the conspirators of 268); Mennen 2011, 231–7. There is some numismatic evidence for Aureolus' usurpation: RIC V 2, 589, nrs. 1–2. In this dangerous period of his reign Gallienus issued one of his most famous coin series, the so-called 'animal coins.' Göbl 2000, 94 says about this emission: 'Diese Emission ist wohl die bekannteste des Gallienus. Die Reverse bringen ein ganzes Pantheon von Schutzgöttern des Kaisers mit zugeordneten Tieren aus Zoo und Fabel.'
- 474 Zosimus 1.41.1; Ioannes Antiochenus FHG IV, 599, frg 153.
- 475 See RIC V 1, 211, nr. 1 (mint of Rome).
- 476 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 27.1 (*consecratio* of Gallienus); 33.31f. See De Blois 1976, 8; Goltz and Hartmann in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 292. On Marinianus see PIR² L 198; PLRE 559, nr. 1; Kienast 2004, 222. On Gallienus' brother or half-brother Valerian see AE 1981, 767 (AD 253–260); Christol 1986, 207f., nr. 40; PIR² L 257; PLRE I 939, nr. 14; Goltz and Hartmann in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 229, 292.
- 477 'Et patres quidem praeter commune Romani malum orbis stimulabat proprii ordinis contumelia, quia primus ipse metu socordiae suae, ne imperium ad optimos nobilium transferretur, senatum militia vetuit et adire exercitum.'
- 478 On the emperor M. Aurelius Claudius see PIR² A 1626; PLRE 209, nr. 11; Lippold 1992, 380–94; Kienast 2004, 231f.; Drinkwater in CAH² XII 2005, 48–50; Hartmann in Johné *et al.* 2006, 102 note 51; idem in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 297–307; Mennen 2011, 26, 221.
- 479 On M. Aurelius Claudius Quintillus see PIR² A 1480; Kienast 2004, 233; Hartmann in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 307f.
- 480 See Hekster 2015, 225–33.
- 481 Epitome 34.2. See Drinkwater 2007, 71f.; Hartmann in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 301 who on good grounds dates this event in the autumn of 268.
- 482 On this war see Zosimus 1.42–46 and HA *Claudius* 6–12 (which is more a eulogy than historiography). See also Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 34.3–5; Eutropius 9.11–

- 12; Orosius 7.23.1; Syncellus 469; Zonaras 12.26. See Drinkwater in CAH XII² 2005, 49; Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 301ff.; Ando 2012, 204f.
- 483 To quote HA *Claudius* 12.4.
- 484 Eutropius 9.12; Epitome 34.5–35.1; HA *Claudius* 12.3–6; HA *Aurelianus* 37.5f.; Orosius 7.23.2; Syncellus 469; Zonaras 12.26. According to Zosimus 1.47.1 Quintillus killed himself. On Quintillus and his reign see Watson 1999, 46–8; Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 307f. On Aurelianus and his career see PIR² D 135; PLRE I 129f., nr. 6; Kienast 2004, 234ff.; Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 308f.; Mennen 2011, 236f. Not much of his career is known. He may have been born about 214 or 215 in Dacia Ripensis or Sirmium, and may have followed an equestrian military career. He ruled from September 270 to September or October 275 (Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 309ff.).
- 485 See RIC V 1, 233f., nrs. 256–67 (Obverse: Divo Claudio, reverse: *consecratio*) and 233–37, nrs. 256–99.
- 486 See RIC V 1, 266, nrs. 10f. (gold medallions from the mint of Rome); 268, nr. 25; 271, nr. 59; 274, nrs. 75f.; 275, nrs. 80–2; 275, nrs. 86–8; 277, nrs. 101–7; 278, nrs. 117f. and 120; 283, nrs. 166–8; 286f., nrs. 192–203; 288f., nrs. 214–19; 292, nrs. 244f.; 296, nr. 273; 303, nrs. 342f.; 305, nr. 356; 311, nr. 409 (coins of all kinds of metal, from all mints). See also coins of Aurelianus's wife Severina: RIC V 1, 315–18, nrs. 1–4, 8, 11, 13, 18, and 20.
- 487 On Postumus' reign and death see König 1981, 51–140; Drinkwater 1987, 27–35; Christol 2006a, 160f.; Luther in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 329–31 and 333. On Ulpius Cornelius Laelianus see PIR 546; PLRE I 492; Kienast 2004, 244f.; Luther in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 333; Mennen 2011, 235. There is numismatic evidence of his imperial pretensions: RIC V 2, 372f., nrs. 1–10 (minted at Mogontiacum).
- 488 On the period following Postumus' death see Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 33.8–14; HA Trg Tyr 5, 6, 8, 24; Ioannes Antiochenus FHG IV, 598, frg 152.1 (a fairly chaotic summary). See König 1981, 132–40; Drinkwater 1987, 35–44; Potter 2004, 265f.; Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 41; Luther in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 333–8.
- 489 On M. Aurelius Marius see PIR² A 1555; PLRE 562, nr. 4; Kienast 2004, 245. Nothing of his career is known. He produced some coinage at Cologne, see RIC V 2, 377f., nrs. 1–19 (in gold and silver).
- 490 On this series of coins see RIC V 2, 388f., nrs. 12–25 (in gold). The following legions are mentioned: II Augusta (Britain), II Traiana (Egypt), III Gallica (the east), IV Flavia (the east), V Macedonica (lower Danube area), X Fretensis (Palestine), X Gemina (middle Danube area), XIII Gemina (Dacia), XIV Gemina (middle Danube area), XX Valeria Victrix (Britain), XXII Primigenia (Germania Superior), XXX Ulpia (Germania Inferior). See Drinkwater 1987, 180f. On M. Piauvonius Victorinus see PIR P 302; PLRE 965 nr. 12; Kienast 2004, 246; Luther in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 334–6. Not much of his career is known.
- 491 On C. Pius Esuvius Tetricus' life and career see PIR² E 99; PLRE 885 nr. 1; Christol 1986, 221; Drinkwater 1987, 39–44, 91; Kienast 2004, 247f.; Luther in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 336ff. On the end of Tetricus' reign see Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 35.3–5; Eutropius 9.13.1; HA Trg Tyr 24.2–4; Orosius 7.23.5. See Drinkwater 1987, 42ff., 91; Christol 2006a, 166f. On his subsequent function in south Italy (*corrector Lucaniae*) see Eutropius 9.13.2; Epitome 35.7; HA *Aurelianus* 39.1. See Christol 1986, 59f.; Drinkwater 1987, 91.
- 492 See Luther in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 339ff.
- 493 König 1981, 140; Drinkwater 1987, 120; Watson 1999, 90; Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 305.
- 494 See *Panegyrici Latini* 5.4.2; 8.21.2; 9.4.1. See Drinkwater 1987, 78ff., 106; Le Bohec 2008, 299; Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 305. In 9.4.1 the author of *Panegyricus Latinus* 9 calls Victorinus' soldiers Batavian robbers, clearly pointing at troops from Germania Inferior.
- 495 See *Panegyricus Latinus* 8.21.2 and 9.4.1.

- 496 On Iulius Placidianus see PIR² I 468; PLRE I 704, nr. 2; ILS 569 = CIL XII 2228; CIL XII 1551; Pflaum 1976, 110f.; Watson 1999, 167; Porena 2003, 56; Potter 2004, 265; Christol 2006a, 167, and above all Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 305 note 28; Johnes *et al.* 2008, II, 1073 PPO 16, and Mennen 2011, 165, 181.
- 497 On Aurelian's reign see Watson 1999, 43–116; Potter 2004, 268–72; Drinkwater in CAH² XII 2005, 51–3; Christol 2006a, 164–8; Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 309–23; Ando 2012, 206–18.
- 498 See Dexippus frg 28 and 30 Martin; Zosimus 1.48 (defeat of Germanic invaders in Pannonia); HA *Aurelianus* 21.1 (crushing defeat at Placentia and panic in Rome, consultation of the Sibylline Books there). See Drinkwater 2007, 72–8. See also Watson 1999, 50–2; Potter 2004, 269; Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 312f.
- 499 See Drinkwater 2007, 77.
- 500 Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 313. Of this Domitianus coins are known, which show his imperial pretensions: RIC V 2, 590, nr. 1, and Hekster 2011, 177 with fig. 1.
- 501 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 35.6. Cf. Epitome 35.4; Eutropius 9.14; HA *Aurelianus* 38.1f. See Watson 1999, 52f.; Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 313f.
- 502 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 35.7. See Watson 1999, 143–52. On this great monument and its effects see Dey 2011.
- 503 On Aurelian's fight against the Goths and other marauders, and the abandoning of Dacia see Eutropius 9.15.1; HA *Aurelianus* 39.7; Syncellus 470. See Wolfram 1997, 45; Watson 1999, 54–6, 155–7; Potter 2004, 270; Hartmann in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 315.
- 504 RIC V 1, 308, nr. 381. Zenobia figures on imperial coinage as well, see RIC V 2, 584, nrs 1–2. On Vaballathus and his pretensions see Long in Mathisen and Sivan 1996, 63ff.; Hartmann 2001, 242–52; Millar in Cotton and Rogers III, 2006, 256–61. In CISem II 3971 (Palmyrenean) we read: 'For the life and [victory] of Septimius Vaballathus Athenodo[rus] the most illustrious king of kings and corrector of the entire orient, son of Septimius [Odaenath, king] of kings, and for the life of Septimia Bathzabbai (Zenobia) the most illustrious queen, mother of the king of kings, daughter of Antiochus, 14 miles.'
- 505 See Millar 1971, 5 (Longinus); Dodgeon and Lieu 1994, 86 referring to Athanasius, *Historia Arianorum* 71 (Zenobia supporter of Paul of Samosata); Hartmann 2001, 302ff. (Longinus); 315–23 (Paul of Samosata and his relations with Palmyra). On Paul of Samosata, his ostentatious public behavior and his conflicts with orthodox Christianity at Antioch see Eusebius *HE* 7.27–30. See Hartmann 2001, *ibidem*; Haensch in De Blois *et al.* 2003, 117ff.; Slootjes 2011a, 111–14.
- 506 Hartmann 2001, 300–8, 315–23.
- 507 That recruiting took place in Egypt is indicated by Berlin Papyrus 1, 680 ('Isis to her family: everyone is in the army'). Unfortunately it is not known what the date of this message is.
- 508 Zosimus 1.44.1f. Cf. HA *Claudius* 11.1, an unprecise and pro-Claudian chapter. On those events in and about Egypt see Hartmann 2001, 281–9.
- 509 Zosimus 1.52.3–4 lists Moesians, Pannonians, and military from Noricum and Raetia, maybe all of them in *vexillationes* taken from the *limes*. Moreover pretorians, and Mauretanian and Dalmatian cavalry. Zosimus adds troops from the east, *i.e.* from Asia, (Tyana!), Mesopotamia, Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine that had probably been added to Aurelian's army after the Palmyrene defeats at Tyana, Antioch, and Emesa.
- 510 Anonymus Continuator Dionis FHG IV, 197, frg 10.5.
- 511 On this affair see HA *Aurelianus* 22.5–24.1. See Hartmann 2001, 365–8.
- 512 See HA *Aurelianus* 25.1–3, 26.1, 28.2–5; Zosimus 1.50–53. See Hartmann 2001, 368–94.
- 513 Hartmann 2001, 377–81.

- 514 On the demise of Longinus and other helpers of Zenobia, and Aurelian's clemency towards Palmyra, see HA Aurelianus 30.3 and Zosimus 1.56.2f.
- 515 HA Aurelianus 32.2f. See Hartmann 2001, 405ff. On Claudius Firmus see PIR² C 866 = 867 = F 163; PLRE I 341 nr. 7; P. Oxy. 2568, 21f. (23 July 264); P. Berol. inv.1463, 5 (AD 264–265); SB 8913; OGIS 711.
- 516 On Aurelius Marcellinus see PIR² M 178; PLRE I 544 nr. 1; Watson 1999, 167; Hartmann in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 369ff.; Johné *et al.* 2008, II, 1145 Mes. 4.
- 517 On Virius Lupus see PIR V 480; PLRE I 522 nr. 5; Peachin 1996, 127–9; Johné *et al.* 2008, II, 1180 Syr.Coel.11; Mennen 2011, 131f.
- 518 Hartmann in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 318; idem 2001, 395–402.
- 519 HA Aurelianus 35.4: 'His gestis ad Gallias profectus Vindelicos Obsidione barbarica liberavit' (After doing these things, he set out for the regions of Gaul and delivered the Vindelici from a barbarian inroad).
- 520 On Aurelian's *triumphus* see HA Aurelianus 32.4–34.5, an elaborate, but probably largely fictitious description, which nonetheless may have some historical grounds. On this *triumphus* see Haake in Börm *et al.* 2016, 265–70: Aurelian emphasized his potential for victory but did not treat Tetricus and Zenobia too harshly, probably because triumphing over an inner enemy still was ambivalent.
- 521 RIC V 1, 271, nr. 54; 274, nrs. 77f.; 282, nr. 154; 294, nr. 257; 299f., nrs. 307–15; 301, nrs. 319–22; 305, nr. 353; 309, nr. 387; 312, nrs. 417, 419. See Watson 1999, 188–98; Berrens 2004, 89–115; Hartmann in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 320f.; Manders 2012, 150–2.
- 522 This legend was put on *asses* from the mint of Cyzicus: RIC V 1, 301, nrs. 319–22, carrying the legend *Sol Dominus Imperii Romani* on the obverses, and *Aurelianus Aug. cons.* on the reverses.
- 523 See Kienast 2004, 235; Christol 2006a, 167.
- 524 *Restitutor orbis* was, like *restitutor exercitus* and *restitutor orientis*, a frequently recurring title on Aurelian's coins, of all kinds of metal. See RIC V 1, 217, nr. 53; 280, nrs. 139–41; 290, nrs. 233f.; 297–9, nrs. 287–306; 304, nrs. 347–51; 306, nrs. 366–9; 307, nrs. 374f.; 309, nr. 389; 310, nrs. 399–404; see also 270, nr. 52 (*restitutor saeculi*).
- 525 See Watson 1999, 101ff.
- 526 Watson 1999, 105–16; Kreucher 2003, 102–4.
- 527 Kienast 2004, 252. On the reigns of Tacitus and Florianus see Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 36.2–37.1; Eutropius 9.16 (very brief); HA *Tacitus* 13–14; Zosimus 1.63.1f.; Zonaras 12.28 (very brief). See Kreucher 2003, 105–22 (Tacitus, pp. 111–14 his war in Asia Minor), 122–5 (Florianus' rule and his fighting in Asia Minor); Drinkwater in CAH² XII 2005, 53f.; Christol 2006a, 180f.; Johné in idem *et al.* 2008, I, 379–93 (Tacitus); Kreucher in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 395f. (Florianus). On the careers of Marcus Claudius Tacitus and Marcus Annius Florianus see PIR² C 1036 and A 649; PLRE 873 nr. 3 and 367 nr. 6; Kienast 2004, 250–2. According to Johné *et al.* 2006, 130, Tacitus was a military knight who rather late in life had become a senator. See also Mennen 2011, 26.
- 528 On this civil war and the end of Florianus see Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 37.1; Epitome 36.2; HA *Tacitus* 14.1f.; Zosimus 1.64.1–4 (civil war between Probus and Florianus; Probus bided his time at Tarsus until diseases would have diminished his opponent's army). On Marcus Aurelius Probus and his career see PIR² A 1583; PLRE 736 nr. 3; Kienast 2004, 253f., and above all Kreucher 2003, 91–125. Not much of his preceding career is known. He must have followed an equestrian military career. He may have been born at Sirmium, about 232. On his reign see Drinkwater in CAH² XII 2005, 54–7; Kreucher 2003, 133–85; Christol 2006a, 181f.; Kreucher in Johné *et al.* 2008, I, 401–17.
- 529 HA *Probus* 13.2f.; Zosimus 1.65.1f.
- 530 See Peachin 1996, 129–32.

- 531 See HA *Probus* 13.5–14.7; Orosius 7.24.2; Zosimus 1.67.1–68.3. See Kreucher 2003, 133–44 (hasty fortifications: 143f.); idem in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 401–4; Haas 2006, 111; Drinkwater 2007, 78f.; Le Bohec 2008, 299.
- 532 Kreucher 2003, 144f.
- 533 HA *Probus* 16.2f., but see also RIC V 2, 78f. nrs 582–4 (*adventus* coins minted at Siscia), 585–8 (Hercules coins, cf. 83ff. nrs 624–36). See Kreucher in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 405.
- 534 HA *Probus* 19.2. See Altmayer 2014a, 57.
- 535 On this war and the siege of Cremna: Mitchell 2001, 234f.; Kreucher in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 406f. On widespread banditry in Asia Minor see Kreucher 2003, 150–5. On Terentius Marcianus see Johnes 2008, II, 1133 Lyc.3; PLRE I 557 nr. 22.
- 536 See Mitchell 1994, 147; Grünewald 1999, 49–81. Pretenders and rebellious leaders were sometimes defamed as *latrones*, robbers (Grünewald 1999, 104–29).
- 537 HA *Probus* 17.2f.; Zosimus 1.71.1. See Kreucher 2003, 155–7; idem in Johnes 2008, I, 407; Lohwasser in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 578.
- 538 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 37.4; Eutropius 17.3; HA *Probus* 20.1, and Zosimus 1.71.5.
- 539 See also *Panegyricus Latinus* 8.18.3. See Kreucher in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 409f. who puts this affair into perspective. It was probably not all that important.
- 540 See Epitome 37.2; HA *Probus* 18.4f.; Zosimus 1.66.1f.; Ioannes Antiochenus FHG IV 600, frg 158.2; Syncellus 471; Zonaras 12.29. See Kreucher 2003, 164–77; idem in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 410ff. On the usurpation in Britain see Birley in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 51. Bonosus produced imperial coinage: RIC V 2, 592, nrs. 1–3.
- 541 On Marcus Aurelius Carus and his career see Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 38.1 (at the moment of his usurpation he was praetorian prefect); HA *Carus* 5.4, and Zonaras 12.30. See PIR² A 1475; Kienast 2004, 258f.; Burnand II 2006, 606–9, nr. 287 E 219; Kreucher in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 415ff.; Johnes *et al.* 2008, II, 1074, PPO 18; Mennen 2011, 27, 168f., 266. See Altmayer 2014a, 57–132. He was another equestrian military man, and governed from Augustus or September 282 to July or Augustus 283.
- 542 Zosimus 1.71.5. See Kreucher 2003, 180f., 185; idem in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 415f. Cf. Altmayer 2014a, 57–63.
- 543 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 37.5: ‘Abhinc militaris potential convaluit ac senatui imperium creandique ius principis ereptum ad nostrum memoriam, incertum, an ipso cupiente per desidiam an metu seu dissensionum odio.’
- 544 On Carinus see PIR² A 1473; PLRE I 181; Kienast 2004, 261f.; Kreucher in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 417–23; Altmayer 2014a, 142–66. On Numerianus see PIR² A 1564; PLRE I 634; Kienast 2004, 260; Kreucher in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 417–20; Altmayer 2014a, 74f.; 132–42.
- 545 See Altmayer 2014a, 80–7.
- 546 Altmayer 2014a, 131.
- 547 Altmayer 2014a, 132–42. A papyrus text, BGU 7, 1611, 1f., indicates that Carinus and Numerianus were emperors by 15 September 283. See Kreucher in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 419 with note 177. On Carus’ Persian campaign and his end see Eutropius 9.18.1f.; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 38.2–3; Epitome 38.2; HA *Carus* 8.1–3; Festus 24; Syncellus 472; Zonaras 12.30. See Altmayer 2014a, 87–120 (the Persian campaign) and 120–32 (Carus’ death).
- 548 Eutropius 9.19.2; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 39.1; HA *Carus* 13.1; Zosimus 1.73.2.
- 549 On Carinus’ behavior and his end see Eutropius 9.19.1f.; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 39.1–11; Epitome 38.6–8; HA *Carus* 16–19; Zosimus 1.72.1; Ioannes Antiochenus FHG IV, 600, 162f.; Syncellus 472; Zonaras 12.30. See Kreucher in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 421–3; Altmayer 2014a, 142–65.
- 550 See Synesius, *De regno* 11.5.
- 551 See above, pp. 40f.

- 552 Sometimes military units, soldiers, and officers did not know which side to choose, or refused to follow the majority. A notable inscription from Budapest, which is unfortunately not more precisely datable than between 238 and 261, gives an example. Its text was established by Géza Alföldy (see Alföldy 2015, 306ff.). In this text we are told that some units refuse to change their standards. Civil wars also produced stories about violence among friends and members of one family. See Anonymus Continuator Dionis, FHG IV, 194 frg 5, about two brothers fighting one another during the battle between the armies of Gallienus and Ingenuus.

3 Economic sources of imperial power, AD 193–284

3.1. Introduction

This chapter is about the erosion of economic and fiscal sources of imperial power in the period from 193 to 284 AD. Economic sources of imperial power are the production, commercial activities, and profits that can be taxed. Fiscal sources of imperial power are all kinds of taxes, the returns of imperial domains, quarries and mines, and windfalls. Taxation and other state activities, such as legislation and military movements, influenced the economy of the empire, and economic changes had their impact on state income.¹ The period 193–284, particularly the years from 235 to 284, are commonly seen as a period of economic decline. Military and political upheavals caused widespread damage and misery, as did forced, uncompensated requisitions by Roman military forces, which came on top of all regular taxation. In the second half of the third century imperial silver coinage was progressively debased, a clear sign of crisis. Much of the thinking in terms of crisis is visible in bishop Cyprian's treatise *Ad Demetrianum*, chapter 3. In this passage Cyprian says that the world is growing old and suffers from general decay. Crops are smaller, mines and quarries are less productive, the numbers of farmers, sailors, and soldiers are diminishing, and there is moral decay too. Knowledge of arts and sciences is waning. The world is declining to its final setting, the end is near. This picture may be too bleak, though, expressing as it is eschatological expectations of a Christian bishop, but cannot be completely false either.² Cyprian's audience would have lost confidence in his trustworthiness if it would have been. Besides there are indications that the empire was not doing very well economically in the third century. In an article published in a volume on crises in the Roman empire, Willem Jongman points at some interesting data. His first graph shows a high number of shipwrecks in the Mediterranean in the Late Republic and the Early Principate, and a subsequent steep decline.³ His second graph indicates that ice cores from Greenland show Late Republican and Early Imperial levels of atmospheric metal pollution that testify to a spectacular peak in metal extraction during that period. The production of metal started to fall into decay from the times of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, progressively so from about 195 to 220, and more gradually beyond the latter year.⁴ Dated wood remains testify to

a steep decline in building activities from the late second century AD onwards, and particularly in the third century.⁵ And there are more indications pointing at a decline in the third century, which he shows in his article. He refers to Richard Duncan-Jones who surveyed the evidence for agricultural change, and concluded that from the third or even late second century onwards site numbers declined pretty steeply in many parts of the empire, especially the numbers of smaller sites, and that there was an increase in the size of larger sites, which were sometimes fortified.⁶ He could have added that trade to areas east of the empire seem to have declined in the second half of the third century.⁷ Jongman sees the epidemics that raged over the empire under Marcus Aurelius and during the years from 252 onwards, and the ensuing decline of the size of the population of the Roman empire as the main causes, which in our view is a too one-sided explanation. He underestimates the impact of war.⁸

Imperial expenditure cannot have declined during the period 193–284, certainly not under Septimius Severus, Caracalla, and Maximinus Thrax, emperors who increased military pay and conducted expensive campaigns, nor under Maximinus' successors, who all had to fight difficult wars, set up great military campaigns, and were obliged to pay large tributes to enemies such as the Goths and the Persians, donatives to the armed forces, and *congiaria* to the populace of Rome. Marching armies cost extra money and supplies, so moving armed forces from one sector to another front increased the burden of military expenditure.⁹ One way to economize was to stop expensive building policies in Rome, which indeed happened after the period of the Severi, until Aurelian built his defensive wall around the built-up areas of the city, and Diocletian started the construction of enormous baths. This was certainly not enough, though. More compensation in the form of higher income was needed. But did the emperors have enough sources of income to realize such a compensation? Was the fiscal basis of their power strong enough?

Imperial income was generated, as was already told in chapter 1, by taxes, requisitions, returns of imperial domains, confiscations, inheritances, booty, and windfalls. Imperial domains produced not only food, but also the products of mines and quarries. There were taxes on manumission of slaves (5 per cent) and inheritances (5 per cent), which since 212 applied to practically all free inhabitants of the empire, land and poll taxes, customs, and taxes on sales.¹⁰ In the third century existed a system of raising food for the armed forces, the *annona militaris*, which under Septimius Severus had been developed to a regular burden.¹¹ According to Scheidel and Friesen, in the second century AD taxes constituted about 5–7 per cent of the GDP of the Roman empire. This seems to be fairly low, but Italy and Rome did not pay any *tributum* or poll tax, so the percentage was certainly higher elsewhere, up to 10 per cent in Egypt.¹² Living costs at subsistence level, extra consumption by the happy few, plus necessary investments (seed corn!) may together have taken away up to 80 per cent, so 10 per cent would have been about half of the surplus, local taxes, *munera*, and other burdens excluded. And *munera* were already a serious burden in the Severan period, and were consequently being evaded. In *Dig.* 50.2.1 (Ulpian) we are

told that governors should take care to recall to their native soil decurions who are proven to have left their seats in the community to which they belong and to have migrated to other places and see that they perform the appropriate *munera*. In *Dig.* 50.5.1.2 (Ulpian) we read that liable persons sometimes tried to register themselves as tenants on imperial domains in order to decrease their burdens.¹³ Town councilors also tried to alleviate their burdens through widening the circle of people liable to do public services, or by shifting off obligations to farmers and other reasonably well-off people in surrounding villages and the town itself.¹⁴ So every attempt at increasing the rate of existing taxes or at adding new ones would have been highly unpopular. Increasing the rate of taxation could also turn out to change the equilibrium between parts of the empire. Regions that generated large surpluses in cash and kind would become visibly more important as sources of imperial income.

As to public borrowing, the reluctance to resort to it is understandable, since it would have been just a short-term solution and a very difficult one, given the absence of banks on the same level as the credit enterprises in medieval and early-modern towns. The alternative to raising the imperial income was enhancing spending power by increasing the volume of imperial coinage, simultaneously debasing individual coins.¹⁵

3.2. Tax territories

Regions where taxes and supplies could be raised are called here ‘tax territories,’ the most profitable ones being Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, the Gauls, and the Iberian peninsula. Italy did not yet pay regular land and poll taxes, but had, since the start of the Principate, paid taxes that applied to Roman citizens only, and was obliged to produce supplies and services in case of heavy warfare in the neighborhood. Taxes are understood as all kinds of taxes.

Actual warfare, roving bands, and passing armies would diminish the fiscal productivity of tax territories. Fighting, plundering and wild foraging would reduce agrarian productivity, and diminish or even preclude local and long-distance trade, which would lower the possibility to tax either commercial activity or agrarian and other production. Marching Roman troops tended to take more than their due and were a burden to the regions they went through. Passing enemy bands were even worse, of course. They took what they could get. What might actually happen when Roman and enemy armies were passing by? In his monograph on the logistics of the Roman army at war, Jonathan Roth describes what foraging, requisitioning, and pillaging entailed.¹⁶ Armies and armed bands, Roman as well as non-Roman, needed food, fodder, firewood, and water on a daily basis. They could obtain food and fodder either by systematic foraging, living off the land, or through carefully organized supply lines. Water and wood, they often had to find locally where they were, but these commodities too could be stored along well-planned routes of advance. Planning their marches beforehand, Roman armies used to rely on fortified storehouses or towns that had to gather supplies before the army would arrive.¹⁷ Raiders from over the border, enemy

armies, or forces that invaded hostile regions in civil war would live off the land or try to conquer well-stocked towns. Requisition amounted to the seizure or forced purchase of goods and often involved providers bringing food, fodder, and other commodities to collection points where the army could find them. If a forced purchase was involved, the price allowed by the government or an army commander used to be well below market prices. In Severan times there was an abortive attempt to prevent this. In *Dig* 50.8.7 (Paul) we read that decurions may not be forced to provide corn at a price cheaper than the price of corn at the time in their *patria*. Payment by the imperial treasury was often delayed, and the treasury might also be defrauded, to the detriment of local people.¹⁸ Sometimes, when only small groups of soldiers or individual military men were foraging, it was the other way round. Local notables seem to have asked too high prices for their commodities when they did not have to fear strong groups of soldiers. According to Michael Speidel, some maximum prices in Diocletian's AD 301 edict may very well indicate maximum levels of indemnity that requisitioning soldiers would have to pay.¹⁹ In some cases, locals might be forced to provide goods without compensation, or they might contribute goods voluntarily to an army or a roving band, in order to evade violent requisitioning.

There are no elaborate, detailed third-century reports about such actions, but – as I proposed in earlier publications²⁰ – in the *Histories* of Tacitus there is a story which may be used as an eye-opener, a parallel which can give us a clue. In *Histories* I 63–69, Tacitus tells us how during the year of the four emperors the Vitellian armies, led by Valens and Caecina, moved through Gaul and modern Switzerland to Italy. They took what they needed, humiliated local notables who gave the military what they needed in a very subservient way, for example at Vienne near Lyon, and destroyed communities that seemed to put up some resistance. According to Tacitus at least one of the generals, Valens, became a very rich man through forced transactions with local proprietors. Tacitus' report is highly rhetorical, but it does give us a clue. Passing armies demanded goods, food, and facilities and could easily turn into looting mobs. So local magistrates gave them what they asked and could not resist. Local notables turned into subservient slaves of passing armies and must have lost face in the eyes of their fellow citizens, whom they were supposed to protect.

There are indications that suggest that similar things happened in the third century. Like Valens in AD 69, some commanders and officers seem to have fared very well. In 1992, Piet Sijpesteijn published a papyrus text about the descendants of a former third century centurion, the Aponii, who now belonged to the richest people of the Roman East.²¹ Like Valens' troops had done at Vienne, soldiers of the emperor Elagabalus, after Macrinus' defeat in 218, wished to sack Antioch on the day following their victory, although the city had done nothing against them. The emperor, or of course his tutors and advisors, barely managed to prevent this by promising them an extra bonus of 2,000 sesterces each. The amount of money needed to carry this promise into effect was in part collected from the people of Antioch by the emperor's assistants.²² Aurelian's soldiers, under way to the east to fight Palmyra, having besieged and taken

Tyana in Asia Minor, very much wanted to plunder the town. The emperor somehow managed to prevent this, in spite of the fact that the inhabitants, together with some Palmyrene troops, had put up quite a resistance.²³ This event testifies to Aurelian's authority over the troops.

Under Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Gordian III and Philip, already well before the intense military activity of the period 249–284, which necessitated many improvised and damaging transfers of troops,²⁴ villagers from Euhippe (Asia), Takina (Phrygia), Skaptopare (Thrace), Aragua (Asia), and some other places in the neighborhood of military transit routes complained to the emperors telling them that soldiers turning off the main roads had been harassing them and that military avarice and misconduct had brought them into misery and bankruptcy, which would ultimately lead to *anachoresis* (flight from the land) and lower tax returns from their regions.²⁵ In contrast, Pisidian Antioch, outside the zones of the military transit routes, seems to have fared well in the third century.²⁶ Such complaints were not new, but it is remarkable that in the first half of the third century they concentrate on imperial domains and along military transit routes. They indicate a structural logistical problem, not just incidental military misconduct.²⁷ The imperial infrastructure was being overstretched, and could no longer deliver all food, goods, and services that were needed to satisfy the demands of the large armies that were passing by now. But another reason must be that groups of soldiers on their own initiative and without compensation demanded more than their due without payment, also in regions at some distance from the military highways, as is clearly demonstrated in the petition from Skaptopara.²⁸ At the end of the fourth century the author of the *Historia Augusta* wrote in *Alexander Severus* 51.6 that soldiers were not allowed by Severus Alexander to make private expeditions off the road. Apparently this problem was important enough to include it in this 'mirror of princes.' This is what should not happen, and so Alexander was made to prevent it. Not only complaints, but also dedications, show which routes the imperial armies took. The people of Ariassos near Termessos put up dedications to Lucius Verus, Caracalla, Severus Alexander, and Gordian III, all of whom passed through, leading large armies to the usual eastern killing fields.²⁹

As Armin Eich argues, zones of the empire that had been hit by actual warfare normally recuperated fairly well, if only intensive warfare and movements of sizeable armies did not go on for years on end, and if there was a sufficiently long period without wars or invasions.³⁰ In areas of enduring actual warfare things could be worse, particularly when violence and devastation went hand-in-hand with forced recruitment of soldiers, deportation, banditry, famine, and epidemics. What happened when enemy bands, spreading out over an invaded region, were staying or almost living there in order to forage or plunder? In his book on warfare and food supply in Roman republican wars, Paul Erdkamp concludes that such catastrophes, for example during the Second Punic War in south Italy, hit the rural population hard but unevenly. Part of the peasantry was pushed below the minimum requirement for subsistence. Confronted not only with empty stores, destroyed fields, and stolen livestock, but also with the continued threat of hostile bands or armies, many of the peasants that were affected would

eventually leave their farms in search of more secure conditions of survival,³¹ that is, if they had not yet turned to banditry or had been deported.

Again, there is hardly any detailed third-century evidence for the existence of such hardships, but there is evidence from the period of the emperor Marcus Aurelius and from Late Antiquity. It is clear by now, for example, that the Gothic wars of the sixth century in Italy, which were characterized by intensive warfare and lasted for decades, had a devastating impact on Italian agriculture.³² There is some relevant parallel information in Ammianus Marcellinus' report about the future emperor Julian's war against the Alamanni, which in 357 resulted in the great battle of Strasbourg. Having briefly mentioned, in 15.8.1, heavy devastations in (northern) Gaul Ammianus tells us that Julian was appointed *caesar* by Constantius II to fight the Germanic invaders on the Rhine (AD 355). In 16.2.2 the author tells us that Julian was planning to fight and destroy the invaders who had been spreading out to plunder in the neighborhood of Augustodunum (Autun). In 17.3.1–6 Ammianus relates that Julian refused to force additional levies upon parts of Gaul that had been heavily hit by war and plunder, knowing as he did that such measures had often driven provinces to extreme poverty. Instead, Julian wished to lower taxes in war-ridden areas, and try to get supplies from the hinterlands. In 17.8.1f. Ammianus says that Julian was in great anxiety, for he could not leave to fight the invaders until the grain supply was brought up from Aquitania – an obvious hinterland of the north Gallic war zone. Not willing to wait any longer he took grain from military winter stocks and attacked. Apparently Julian was trying to forage and requisition in an entire province, Aquitania, not just in a small zone. This system seems to have started under Septimius Severus and Caracalla. Mitthof makes clear that until their times armies were still foraging and requisitioning at local levels along the routes they were taking but that Severus and his son started to impose these burdens on entire provinces or even broader areas.³³

An impressive story has been handed down by a papyrus text from the village of Thmouis in northern Egypt, a region where, in Marcus Aurelius' times, rebellion, violence, and the Antonine plague caused widespread misery.³⁴ In AD 167/168 the village was almost depopulated by a sequence of fatal events. Fellow villagers had gone away to evade heavy taxation, which they could no longer bear, now that security was waning. So smaller numbers had to yield equally heavy taxes, which drove out more people; a fatal cycle. Besides the village was ransacked by groups of rebellious *boukoloi*. The bandits were chased away by soldiers, who unfortunately killed most of the remaining villagers, whose ranks were further depleted by the plague. The few surviving villagers could no longer pay their dues, but tried to get back former fellow villagers in order to restore their carrying capacity. They were successful in finding them, but were chased away by landowners and farmers who had leased land to the runaways. Such runaway behavior, or flight from the land, is called *anachoresis*. It was not only practiced by poor farmers but also by local *curiales* evading *munera*.³⁵ In the *Digesta* the jurist Paul, who was active in the later Severan period, comments upon it, saying that tenants who without good reason leave their plot of

land before the term of tenancy is over may be forced by law to pay the entire rent for the whole period mentioned in their contract.³⁶

In 71.16.1 Cassius Dio tells us that at the end of Marcus Aurelius' reign the Iazyges, living beyond the Middle Danube, made an agreement with this emperor, which was similar to the one the Marcomanni and Quadi had achieved. The Iazyges had to move to a distance twice as long from the Danube. Marcus had been thinking of utterly destroying them but they still were too strong for that. In 71.16.2 Dio continues:

For that they were still strong at this time and had done the Romans great harm was evident from the fact that they returned 100,000 captives that were still in their hands even after the many who had been sold, had died, or had escaped, and that they promptly furnished as their contribution to the alliance 8000 cavalry, 5500 of whom he sent to Britain.

In AD 180 a more definite peace treaty was concluded with several warring tribes.³⁷ To counter depopulation and an ensuing decrease of tax returns Marcus Aurelius decided to settle Germanic tribesmen, for example Naristi, in what is now southern Germany. Germanic war aims were pillage and deportation,³⁸ not yet settling within Roman borders, but many of them did not mind when they had the chance to do so. One hundred thousand may be an exaggerated number, but the passage about the Iazyges certainly gives us a clue to understand the scale of devastation and deportation connected with long-enduring invasion and warfare.

Deportations on this scale seem to have repeated themselves in Italy in 259–260 and in the Balkans in the period from Decius to Aurelian.³⁹ To German and other tribes deportation on this scale was quite important. They received well-trained workers and could make money through slave trade. There is just enough evidence to establish that in the third century people deported from the Roman empire did do useful work for their new masters. In 1.33.1 Zosimus makes clear that during Valerian's reign, about 255–256, invaders from modern Ukraine were able to cross the Black Sea to Asia Minor because they had found trained sailors among the conquered population of coastal cities. The result was (1.33.3) that the barbarians took Trebizond and gained a lot of booty and prisoners. In 1.34.1 the same author tells us that captured workers built boats for the northern invaders, which could bring them to Asia Minor. Prisoners from the Roman empire who had been captured together with the emperor Valerian (AD 260) helped to build a dam in a river in Persia.⁴⁰ Others were allotted to various communities and royal domains where they tilled the fields.⁴¹ But the Roman provinces from which such people had been deported missed those skilled workers and became less productive, which diminished their value as a tax territory.

In regions that had been hit by prolonged warfare, pillaging, and banditry could become rampant. Under the emperor Commodus, after the great wars of his father Marcus Aurelius, large bands consisting of remaining barbarians, deserters, runaway slaves, and other drifters were still very strong in the Rhine and Danube regions. One of them, led by an able commander, Maternus, could

even besiege a Roman legion, the *Octava Augusta*, in its own camp at Strasbourg, and attack Italy.⁴² This example indicates that wars could peter out and de-escalate to banditry, whereas brigandage could escalate to war.⁴³ According to Cassius Dio 76.10, under Septimius Severus (about 205) a gang of 600, commanded by Felix Bulla, for two years continued to plunder Italy, until the praetorian prefect Papinian arrested him. All kinds of miserable people joined bands of brigands. Even imperial freedmen, working and living in bad conditions on the emperor's domains, sometimes fled their domiciles and joined bands of robbers.⁴⁴ In the *Codex Theodosianus* there is some evidence about roving bandits and barbarians and misbehaving veterans and deserters from the fourth and early fifth centuries. In CTh. 7.1.1, we read about burning alive people who conspire with barbarians, giving them a chance to plunder (28 April 323). In 7.18.7 (12 July 383) people who are lodging deserters or bandits are threatened with heavy punishment. In 7.18.14 (2 October 403) provincials get the right to fight and overpower deserters. In 7.18.15 a public right is mentioned to punish in self-help and self-defense persons who desert military camps in order to plunder (24 March 406). CTh 7.20.7 (August 353?) mentions veterans who turn to banditry, instead of finding a decent means of subsistence. In 9.14.2 we find an unlimited right of local self-defense against soldiers and other citizens who after nightfall plunder the fields and rob travelers on the highways. Similar things must have happened in the third century as well.

Such forms of violence, added to the necessity to collect and safely transport supplies, resulted in a proliferation of surveillance posts along important roads and at frequented crossroads, not only in frontier zones but also in their hinterlands. Some favorite transit areas, such as the Rhine and Danube provinces, but also Asia Minor, lodged a fair number of *stationes*, manned by *beneficiarii*, military who could assist local governments in raising and gathering food and other commodities, in guarding important crossroads, mines or quarries, or indeed in sending petitions to the emperor. The number of *stationes* was always much larger in the Rhine and Danube regions than in the east and North Africa, where the presence and efficacy of local governments was stronger, among other things in peacekeeping, the assembling of food, and tax gathering.⁴⁵ In gathering food, military assistance must have been badly needed, also in Asia Minor. Many communities there being in principle unable to feed their inhabitants on a permanent basis, famines and food problems were recurring phenomena and *sitonai* regularly had to acquire extra grain.⁴⁶ Such communities could not easily raise extra stocks for the armies without military help or pressure. Such problems also existed in other regions with a relatively heavy military presence. Already in 221, well before the great wars, there were foraging problems at the eastern borders. P. Dura 64 reflects difficulties of requisitioning in that year in the Middle Euphrates region.⁴⁷ In *Digesta* 50, the book containing regulations applying to municipalities, rulings about local grain budgets and the supplying of food are strict and do not often allow for exemptions from obligations. In this respect rulings about the local grain budgets and the providing of food are on a par with regulations about *angariae*, the providing of means of transportation.⁴⁸ This may point out that food surpluses, like means of transportation, were

not plentiful anywhere in the empire, not even in relatively productive regions such as Egypt and North Africa.⁴⁹

Was the situation in war zones and their hinterlands within the Roman empire in the third century comparable to that in Julian's Gaul about 355–358? Or to that of war-ravaged areas in the period of the Second Punic War, the year of the four emperors, or the reign of Marcus Aurelius? In other words, was their value as tax territories declining? The first region to discuss is Asia Minor. Some regions in the north and northwest of this large area were repeatedly hit and damaged by invasions of raiders who came over the Black Sea or through the eastern parts of modern Rumania. In 253 and 260 some eastern territories of Asia Minor were plundered by the Persians.⁵⁰ Between 255 and 263 important cities in the Pontic regions, Cappadocia, Cilicia, Bithynia, and even Asia were badly damaged. This happened, for example, to Trapezus, Caesarea in Cappadocia, Heraclea, Nicomedia, and Ephesus. Many cities, among them Ephesus, Pergamon, Sardes, Ancyra, Aezani, Sagalassus, Side, and Prusias ad Hypium, began to build walls.⁵¹ The town council of Nicaea showed them on a series of unique local coins, issued about 259–261, which break through traditional standard patterns, a sign of acute emergency. Normally their coins show a fixed program of images and texts, showing temples, locally important deities, other traditional Nicene symbols, and imperial victory symbols.⁵² During the years of crisis, 249–268, Christian leaders in war-stricken areas were confronted with problems ensuing from wars and invasions. One of them was Gregorius Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neocaesarea in Pontus, in a region that from about 255 was repeatedly raided by barbarian bands. In his Canonical Letter he expresses his viewpoints as to Christians who profited from the misery caused by marauding Goths and Borans. There were Christians who were trading booty or 'found' the possessions of other people. His lines also show a breakdown of common local authority. People now were turning to a bishop. Gregorius' Canonical Letter is said to herald the important part to be played by bishops in arbitration and the administration of justice from the fourth century onwards.⁵³ Sometimes somebody came back, after having been deported by barbarian raiders, such as a slave who died after having returned from exile about 263.⁵⁴

In other parts of Asia Minor, which were not directly hit by actual warfare, fiscal, and logistical pressures must have augmented, the more so because Asia Minor was also the logical hinterland of other war zones, for example the Balkans and Syria/Mesopotamia. An indication is that Roman military presence increased, also in regions that had been *inermes*.⁵⁵ Apparently *stationarii*, *frumentarii*, and other military had to assist in peacekeeping and gathering supplies. In the third century petitioners are complaining about abuses they are suffering at the hands of *frumentarii*, *stationarii*, and imperial tax collectors called *kollektiones*.⁵⁶ In a text from Kemaliye (near Philadelphia, Asia, Severan age, about AD 197–224) villagers complain about high-handed treatment by *kollektiones* and *frumentarii*.⁵⁷ In the Takina dossier, Caracalla and his governor Gavius Tranquillus react to a petition by the magistrates and people of Takina (town and imperial estate in Phrygia, AD 212–213). The Takina people had sent complaints about misbehaving,

plundering, and harassing soldiers to the emperor, who had sent them a positive reply, but to no avail.⁵⁸ In a petition presented to the emperor Philip and his son by peasants of an imperial domain near Aga Bey Köyü (Phrygia, AD 244–246), there are complaints about misbehaving *kolletores*, *frumentarii* and men who demand services and recruits. Soldiers even kidnap peasants for ransom. The farmers threaten to leave their land (*anachoresis*).⁵⁹ In a petition by the village of Aragua, which was situated on an imperial domain in Phrygia, the petitioners complain that they are not close to military encampments, but are nonetheless harassed by foraging soldiers and requisitioning *caesariani*. Their estates are being deserted.⁶⁰ In a fragmentary text from Kavacık (Lydia, AD 247–248), a petition to Philip the Arab and his son inscribed on a large monument, words such as *frumentarii*, *kolletores*, *praetoriani*, *enochlesis*, and *eispraxis* are just recognizable.⁶¹ In a not very precisely datable text from Kassar (Lydia, second or third century AD) villagers complain about demanding soldiers and *kolletores*. They are now living in penury, being bereft of bath and the necessities of life.⁶²

From the times of Septimius Severus onwards, Asia Minor had to provide recruits, for example to his new legions I and III Parthica.⁶³ A city such as Antioch in Pisidia had to send recruits and commodities to neighboring frontier armies regularly.⁶⁴ Armies could also apply forced recruiting on the way to a front where they would have to fight. Forces underway to the eastern borders could do this in Asia Minor.⁶⁵ Requisitioning by passing armies had always been a burden to the regions along the great military transit routes, but this became a problem in wider regions after the great wars had started in 230. When Severus Alexander camped at Syrian Antioch about 231, supplies for his army were requisitioned from as far away as Pamphylia, presumably being brought by sea to Seleucia in Pieria.⁶⁶

A logical outcome of rising pressures would in the long run have been widespread banditry, as had happened in the last decades of the second century. This actually came about. Banditry may have been more widespread and intense in large parts of Asia Minor in the third century than in the two preceding ages.⁶⁷ In November 256, Valerius Statilius Castus was honored in an epigraphical text at Termessos minor in Lycia, because he had brought peace on land and sea to his region. In this text he was called a *praepositus* of vexillations and an ally of the *augusti* (!), which must mean that he had under his command a combined force of some Roman soldiers and his own private band. According to Stephen Mitchell, Castus' title *symmachos tôn Sebastôn* implies that the troops under his command were local levies, his own private army which enabled him to claim to be no simple officer, but an independent ally. Castus was also *praepositus*, however, which indicates that he also commanded a Roman detachment.⁶⁸ This is not an isolated example. Citing quite a few mid-third century texts that mention military men, peacekeeping, and military misbehavior,⁶⁹ Charlotte Roueché comes to the conclusion that by that time substantial detachments of troops were operating in parts of Asia and of Lycia-Pamphylia, that is – I would like to add – also in regions which had not been directly hit by raiding, and constituted important hinterlands of war zones. It seems likely, she continues,

that in the same period the province of Phrygia and Caria was created and that of Lycia-Pamphylia brought under direct imperial control, to tighten control in response to the tense situation. She makes clear that the emperors who brought this reform into being, Valerian and Gallienus, were relatively strongly represented in epigraphical texts, for example at Aphrodisias.⁷⁰ In similar hinterlands, Pisidia and Isauria, rising pressures resulted in an escalation from banditry to war. Under the emperor Probus Roman commanders had to fight an army of robbers in Isauria, which was ultimately destroyed through the siege of Cremna (AD 278).⁷¹

Of course, many cities were not destroyed nor damaged, and maintained a certain level of prosperity,⁷² but a symptom of the generally bad situation to which many parts of Asia Minor had arrived was the slowing down of traditional building activities, the decay of the 'epigraphical habit,' and regularly occurring *curatellae* in towns. From about 230 people at Ancyra, Aezani, and Sagalassus built fortifications and walls, as Nicaea did under Valerian and Gallienus, no longer temples and status monuments.⁷³ A *curator rei publicae*, a town curator, had to supervise and restore local administration and finance, for example by farming out parcels of local public land or demanding back public property that had been usurped by private proprietors.⁷⁴ In Aphrodisias from Decius to Diocletian there were no inscriptions, with the exception of one short dedication to Salonina, which indicates that not many monuments carrying inscriptions were built in those years.⁷⁵ The conclusion must be that Asia Minor until the 250s could be a logistical hinterland to the armies at the eastern and Lower Danube borders, though not without difficulties and tensions. As a tax territory it was already overstretched. From about 253/254 raising taxes and supplies must have become more problematic because large parts of the region were coming under attack themselves.

And what about adjacent Greece? According to Susan Alcock, Greece, an obvious hinterland of the Lower Danube armies, was better off in the first half of the third century than in the first centuries BC and AD.⁷⁶ From the reign of Valerian to about 269, however, this province was repeatedly hit by wars and invasions but could recover because the barbarians did not stay for years on end.

And then the eastern provinces. As Ben Isaac gathered from Talmudic sources, the levying of supplies by Roman officials and their local assistants may have become a heavy burden in all of them, perhaps already under Severus Alexander.⁷⁷ In 217–218, and of course from 230 to about 273, the province of Mesopotamia was an obvious war zone, where collecting food, animals, and commodities became problematic quite soon. P.Dura 64 reflects difficulties of requisitioning in 221, and P.Dura 129 (AD 225) shows how groups of soldiers were employed to purchase barley from farmers of an imperial domain. They had to compel the imperial freedmen to give it to them.⁷⁸ The provinces of Syria were not much better off. They were most of the time not lying in the front area, but certainly had to contribute much to Roman war efforts against Persia and to warring parties in civil strife. This region seems to have suffered setbacks in its prosperity from 230 to about 273, a period which Sartre calls a time of trials. In those years, especially from about 252, devastations and deportations became a recurring phenomenon in Mesopotamia, Syria, Cappadocia, and Cilicia.⁷⁹ And so was the

billeting of troops. As a text from Phaina (Syria) makes clear, soldiers sometimes preferred forced billeting in private houses, thus saving the money needed to sleep in *mansiones*.⁸⁰ Many Syrian local mints had to contribute to the war effort of the Severan emperors and Philip the Arab, another heavy burden.⁸¹ Besides Syria counted many imperial domains, which no doubt were heavily taxed (see below, p. 157).⁸²

Syria seems not to have suffered irreparable structural damage, though, probably because war periods brought vehement upheavals, such as the plundering of important cities, but were not too long and so allowed for periods of recovery. A sign is that fourth-century AD Syria was thriving.⁸³ There are some signs of increased pressure in the third century, though. Sartre points out that growing insecurity resulted in increasing fortification.⁸⁴ Aurelian's army seems to have been troubled by Syrian bandits during its march to Palmyra in 272.⁸⁵ Banditry may have increased after a long violent period, or nomads from the desert may have got more latitude to plunder Syrian regions. An indication is that under Diocletian and the other tetrarchs there was a great effort to fortify the borders that separated the Roman provinces (important tax-paying and logistical regions) from the nomads.⁸⁶

Roman Egypt had always been heavily taxed. As Adams rightly remarks, the history of Roman Egypt is punctuated throughout by economic hardship, high levels of taxation, administrative malpractice, and attempts to curb these.⁸⁷ Egypt sent corn to Rome on an annual basis, and had to provide food to its own garrison and other military forces. Besides it had to take its share in supplying field armies that operated at the eastern borders of the empire.⁸⁸ Roman military presence had always been strong in this province, especially along important trade routes, at crossroads, and at harbors. Military personnel had always had an important function in the administration of Roman Egypt.⁸⁹

Already in the Severan period, Egypt had to provide extra commodities to Caracalla, and to Severus Alexander's *expeditio orientalis*.⁹⁰ During the decades beyond his reign the province continuously had to provide grain and other commodities to Rome, as usual, and to armed forces as well. Roman military, such as centurions and *stationarii*, had to see to it that supplies were handed in and transported to Alexandria. P. Oxy. 1412 (AD 284) is a text that has to do with a meeting of the council of Oxyrhynchus. On the agenda was some urgent business to be transacted by the appointed *leitourgoi* in connection with transport of corn required by troops (at Babylon near Cairo), the requisite boats having been already provided by the government (ll. 8–10). In P. Oxy. 1415 mention is made of the *annona* for the most excellent soldiers, to be provided with urgency.⁹¹ In P. Oxy. 1, 62 verso (third century AD) a centurion exhorts an acting *strategus* to send a *stationarius* and some other men to see to it that a given cargo will quickly be put on board of a ship. At the end of the century, at the time of Diocletian's visit to Egypt, an order was given to the town council of Panopolis. A papyrus text contains the following message:

Letters have just arrived from Aurelius Isidorus, procurator of the Lower Thebaid, in which he gives orders concerning both the preparation of the

same *annona* of the most noble soldiers who are expected to arrive here with our ruler Diocletian, the invincible senior emperor, and also the provisions. Accordingly, enclosing a copy of what has been written concerning these same provisions, I am obliged to order you to take measures for these provisions, and to select receivers and overseers for each staging post and each kind of provision, and report to me; and also to appoint for the provisions capable men who are able to execute the duty [*leitourgia*] entrusted to them.⁹²

Egypt might have been better off in the first half of the third century than in the first century AD, as some scholars assert,⁹³ but serious problems with taxation, liturgies, and the providing of food, goods and services to imperial administrators and military officials existed, and did so right from the start of the third century, that is in a period of supposed recovery after intense warfare and the Antonine plague.

Between the reigns of Caracalla and Diocletian very few temples were built in Egypt, which is hardly a sign of great prosperity. In this age, the third century, Egyptian communities had great difficulties in finding people who were prepared to participate in liturgies, finance the public services and raise the taxes (with their own estates as a security).⁹⁴ Apparently many preferred to give up their own property instead. Some oppressed, indebted farmers left their land and houses and went elsewhere, hiring out their labor to anyone who could use them. As long as they were not discovered and fetched back, they could live as unregistered people, not paying any taxes. Admittedly, such problems may have hit the medium-sized properties of the ‘gymnasial class’ and the smaller agrarian units of *georgoi* harder than the estates of the emperor and the Alexandrian élite, which owned a good deal of the larger properties (seven out of eight).⁹⁵ The problems that this ‘gymnasial class’ had with providing enough means for public obligations may have been increased by declining values of land and rising wages, phenomena that usually occur after prolonged periods of plague. In Egypt real wages, that is compared to prices, seem to have been higher in the third century than in the first and second centuries.⁹⁶

Papyrus texts containing reports of sessions of town councils, particularly the council of Oxyrhynchus, show that liturgies, costly functions, public services, and taxes loomed large in their agendas.⁹⁷ Local councilors tenaciously tried to push off burdens to farmers, *georgoi*, or to appoint one person to more than one liturgy simultaneously, or to a succession of liturgies without any pause, in spite of a ruling by Septimius Severus, who about AD 200 forbade such things,⁹⁸ which indicates that already by that time there were urgent problems. P. Lond. Inv. 2565 (SB 7696), AD 250, a text in which villagers are nominated to city liturgies, mentions a time when the cities still were prosperous. So it cannot have been easy to squeeze more out of this province than was done since the days of the emperor Augustus, the more so because Egypt, being rather heavily urbanized, needed a lot of surplus food to feed its own population.

Septimius Severus and Philip the Arab made some significant reforms to Egypt, the objective of which can only have been to increase the returns of

taxation and requisition, but it is not certain that they were successful. Severus left the raising of taxes and required goods and services to the newly installed town councils of nome capitals, of course with their own estates as a security. Town councilors were from about 200 also obliged to distribute among themselves local liturgies and costly local functions. They did not become administrators of surrounding villages, but they had a lot of influence there and took the opportunity to push off burdens to villagers.⁹⁹ As was argued in chapter 2, Philip tried to improve land registration in Egypt, disposing of derelict land, and introduced *dekaprotai* within town councils. He reshaped Egyptian administration, aiming at an increase in all kinds of proceeds.¹⁰⁰ Important issues were a revision of the way in which taxes and landed property were registered, and an extension of liturgical obligations to persons outside the group of *bouleutai*.¹⁰¹ At the end of Philip's reign there were riots in Alexandria, the course of which has already very well been analyzed by S.I. Oost. Basing himself on the *Oracula Sibyllina* and some additional sources, he describes how the Alexandrians rebelled, tried to prevent the corn ships from setting sail for Rome, and finally turned to a spontaneous persecution of the Christians. The sedition was quelled, but may indicate that Philip's reforms put harsh pressures on the population of Egypt, and that grain surpluses were less plentiful than has been thought.¹⁰²

From about 260 onwards, Egypt can hardly have fulfilled its obligations, scourged as it was by the plague, invasions by the Blemmyes, civil strife, rebellion, and a Palmyrene attack, which had to be met by an army largely consisting of Egyptian conscripts.¹⁰³ So there were not just material but also human losses, which may have come on top of demographic damage wrought by the plague of 252. Instead of being a productive hinterland to the eastern and Balkan armies, Egypt had become an embattled area itself. Even as late as Diocletian's reign papyrus texts, for example Papyri Panopolis Beatty 1 and 2, show government officials struggling to maintain control over Egyptian agrarian productivity, and squeeze out of the country what they needed to feed the emperor and his entourage who were about to visit Egypt.¹⁰⁴

In the Danube and Balkan regions some parts were repeatedly hit by invasions, devastations, and deportations already from 238 onwards. The Balkan area also suffered from military high-handedness along the military transit routes.¹⁰⁵ Repeated invasions in this wide region could easily disturb important mining activities. The Dacian goldmines were important¹⁰⁶ but Pannonia, Dalmatia, Moesia, and Thrace were not irrelevant mining areas either. Pannonia and Dalmatia, for example, produced silver, iron, and some gold, and Moesia Superior gold, silver, copper, lead, iron, and salt.¹⁰⁷ Thrace harbored mining areas as well, for many years. Continuous invasions, combined with ensuing brigandage and flight from the land, could jeopardize the logistics of the largest group of Roman forces, the Danube armies. The number of military and camp followers to feed was large, but many of their hinterlands were not densely populated and did not count many communities, which may explain the relatively great number of *stationes* manned by *beneficarii*, which were situated along transit routes, in mining areas, and near towns and villages.¹⁰⁸ They did the work that

in Asia Minor, for example, communal irenarchs could do. Diminishing agricultural returns caused by rising and continuing violence would unavoidably necessitate Roman authorities to either spread the effects of military crises to other, further away, territories through extra taxing them, or face military rebellion and usurpations of imperial power.¹⁰⁹

The damage done by invasions and other violence was not uniform over the entire wide region. Dacia, Moesia Inferior, and Thrace suffered badly, particularly in the period 249–271. The most densely populated and most prosperous areas of Pannonia, the western half of modern Hungary, were briefly hit under Valerian, and again in 260, but profited by Gallienus' border policy. He seems to have settled Marcomans in Pannonia, and concluded a treaty with their king Attalus, in this way recruiting new allies who could help him to defend the border. Neighboring Noricum seems to have rapidly recovered from damage done by invaders in 213 and 234 but the situation here deteriorated in the third quarter of the third century.¹¹⁰ Raetia saw part of the *limes* broken through, and had to cope with the infiltration of Alamans into the Agri Decumates since about 254, which put neighboring Raetia in the forefront of border fighting and Germanic attack.¹¹¹ Some ancient authors, making no difference between the various Danube and Balkan regions, observe that 'Illyricum' by the third quarter of the third century had come to dire straits. In 1.37.3 Zosimus tells us that barbarian inroads and the plague had emptied the cities of Illyricum.¹¹² Some modern authors seem to agree. Speaking of the third quarter of the third century, Andras Mócsy characterizes the situation as 'third-century collapse,'¹¹³ which is exaggerated, but the situation in Dacia, Moesia Inferior, and Thrace was grave enough. Invasions started in 238, to culminate in the period 249–271.

There was enough booty for the barbarians to take, for in the Severan period these regions seem to have witnessed a period of unprecedented material prosperity, probably caused by the rise in pay that the military received under Septimius Severus and Caracalla.¹¹⁴ Invaders stayed in those regions for more than 20 years, and new waves of them arrived by land and sea, which diminished chances of recovery. Philippopolis was destroyed and depopulated, and Nicopolis ad Istrum, which had been a thriving town in Moesia Inferior, lost its extramural houses through fire. There are more traces of devastations. The town was besieged on at least two occasions. The south gate was blocked and the defensive ditch was extended. Recovery did not take place until the closing years of the century when the frontier was restored.¹¹⁵ The situation in Thrace and Moesia Inferior may not have become as bad as in the fifth century AD, though. In that age towns changed into fortresses because of the semi-permanent violence and unsafety, and a steep demographic decline was unmistakable.¹¹⁶ Such things did not yet happen in the third century but the situation was not entirely dissimilar. How bad the situation had become in Dacia, which since about 246 had been at the center of barbarian attack, was made clear by the emperor Aurelian, who gave up Dacia, and moved its remaining Roman population to Moesia, where a repopulation was badly needed. In HA *Aurelian* 39.7 we are told that Aurelian, seeing that Illyricum was devastated and Moesia was in a ruinous state, led away from Dacia both soldiers and provincials, establishing the people who had been moved out in Moesia.

Zosimus 1.71.1 and HA *Probus* 18.1 record that Probus settled Bastarnae in Thrace. Under the Tetrarchy Thrace was repopulated once again by transplanting people from Asia Minor to this region.¹¹⁷ If these waves of new settlers could be accommodated in Thrace without much friction and within a relatively short period, this province must have lost a lot of people before. How wise Aurelian's policy had been, was made clear by a reviving prosperity in the fourth century, up to 376, the year of the Gothic migration into the empire.¹¹⁸

The upshot is that a sizeable part of the Danube lands endured long periods of continuous warfare, devastation, and deportation. Two important regions, Dacia and the Agri Decumates, were given up. So the Danube provinces, from Raetia to the Black Sea, must have become a deteriorating tax territory, more or less like Gallia Belgica under Julian the Apostate. Some parts, such as the most populated part of Pannonia, may have remained relatively prosperous until about 260 but this does not change the overall picture. Like Julian's army in Gaul about 355–358, the Roman armed forces at the Danube would have needed hinterlands that could fill the logistical gap. Italy, Greece, North Africa, and western Asia Minor would have been the logical choice. Under Valerian and Gallienus, however, Greece, Asia, and Bithynia were plundered at least twice themselves, and also had to act as hinterlands to embattled areas in northern Asia Minor and the east.

North Africa had been blossoming under the Severan dynasty, but had been under heavy fiscal and logistical pressure as well. In some cases this pressure was combined with outright corruption and extortion. In 238 the result was the uprising of the Gordiani.¹¹⁹ Producing more olive oil by the day, as it did, this heavily urbanized region may have had some trouble to find enough grain for Rome and the by now bigger military garrison of Italy. Besides the region had to cope with barbarian inroads and other unrest under Valerian, which probably continued until the reign of Probus who brought peace to it by making agreements with Berber tribes.¹²⁰ Nonetheless North Africa must have contributed supplies and recruits. Valerian and Gallienus, for example, found cavalymen here for their armies.¹²¹

And what about Italy? This fertile land was an obvious logistical hinterland to the Upper and Middle Danube forces. A passage in Herodian's work, 8.2.3, is interesting in this respect. The author tells us that many goods found their way to the Danubian provinces through Aquileia. It is not likely that he is speaking just about trade from far away. The logistical importance of Italy was already clear to Caracalla and his advisers. When he had to fight the Alamanni, in 213, this emperor started to better organize his supply base in north Italy. From his times onwards, until the period of the Tetrarchy, one *corrector* had to supervise Transpadane Italy, and another one the remainder of the peninsula.¹²² But could Italy, heavily urbanized as it was, produce any relevant surpluses, or was it in economic decay to such a degree that it could no longer be of any consequence in supplying the Upper and Middle Danube armies? In 2.11.3 Herodian, a contemporary eye-witness, tells us:

After passing through Pannonia (AD 193, see above, p. 39), Severus arrived at the Italian frontier . . . and presented himself to the inhabitants as emperor

before they had even heard that he was coming. The invasion of so large an army terrified the Italian cities when they heard the news, since the inhabitants of Italy had long ago abandoned armed warfare in favor of the peaceful occupation of farming.

Which is not true, by the way. Italy, like so many other parts of the empire, had to send recruits to imperial armies regularly.¹²³ More important is that Herodian gives us an impression of Italy as a region busy with agriculture, a thriving country. Could that be right, even in the third century? Italy, as so many other regions, had been hit by the Antonine plague and was hit again by the epidemics that started under Trebonianus Gallus, from about 252. In the period of Commodus and Septimius Severus, banditry had been widespread. Probably under Severus an experienced officer who had been centurion in at least five legions and had become a *primus pilus*, a Marcus Septimius, had been appointed *praepositus* of detachments fighting bandits in Umbria, Picenum, and Apulia, and so had been Titus Aurelius Flavianus.¹²⁴ A legendary robber chief in Italy was Felix Bulla who may have been a former guardsman dismissed by Severus in 193. He managed to evade Severus' men for two years, being captured by the praetorian prefect Papinian only because he was betrayed.¹²⁵ In 75.2.5–6, Cassius Dio criticizes Severus for having ousted the Italian youth from the praetorian guard, recruiting selected legionaries instead, saying that it became only too apparent that he (Severus) had ruined the youth of Italy, who turned to brigandage and gladiatorial fighting in place of their former service in the army (*i.e.* the praetorian guard). This is not a very good argument because already in 197 many young Italians could have enlisted in the second legion Parthica, as was pointed out already in chapter 2. A more probable cause of rising banditry may have been rising logistical pressures in the Italian countryside. As a matter of fact, some decades later, when logistical and fiscal pressures were certainly not easier, there were similar problems in Italy. In 246 a praetorian guardsman, tasked with suppressing brigandage, erected a dedication to Victory at Urbino, along with his squad of 20 marines from Ravenna.¹²⁶ About 250 Vitellianus, a knight from Canusium, was honored for loving his home town, and because he had maintained peace and tranquility in south Italy.¹²⁷ Under Gallienus, well within the period of his sole reign, Pomponius Bassus was appointed *corrector totius Italiae*.¹²⁸

North Italy repeatedly became the scene of some heavy fighting, which must have diminished its value as a logistically important area. Maximinus Thrax and his opponents damaged the northeastern parts of Italy during the *bellum Aquileiense* of 238, in 249 the battle between the forces of Decius and Philip was fought near Verona, and in 253 two civil wars quickly succeeded one another, one between Gallus and Aemilianus, and the other one between Aemilianus and Valerian.¹²⁹ Between 259 and 271 north Italy was repeatedly invaded by Germanic warrior groups (259–260, 268, and 270–271), in some cases up to Lake Bolsena or Ravenna, and was a focal point in Gallienus' struggle against the *Imperium Galliarum*. This repeated warfare induced Gallienus to fortify Milan and Verona.¹³⁰ Aquileia had already become a strong point before 238, when it was

able to keep off Maximinus Thrax. In 267–268 the western parts of the Po Valley witnessed the civil war against Aureolus. The course this war took proves, by the way, that Milan under Gallienus had become a strongly fortified military center that was able to withstand a long siege. North Italy had to bear other logistical burdens as well. It harbored armies and imperial headquarters under Gallienus, Claudius II, and Aurelian,¹³¹ and it became a military transit region between Gaul and Illyricum after the Agri Decumates had been given up.¹³² The Po Valley regions became also in this respect strategically more important than before, and probably had to suffer the same military misconduct that other transit regions had been enduring. Nonetheless north Italy did not suffer prolonged periods of enemy presence, as did Thracia and Moesia Inferior, and consequently could recover after every raid or war.¹³³ In the fourth century it was a thriving part of the empire, lodging permanently one of the imperial headquarters.

Even so, there may have been some structural decline in at least parts of Italy, especially in central Italy and the south, well before the Antonine plague, and progressively so after the first two Severan emperors. Already under Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, and Septimius Severus, the number of building inscriptions declined.¹³⁴ In parts of central and south Italy there may have been a shrinkage in the number of occupied agrarian sites, a rise of extensive farming, an increasing production of cereals instead of cash crops, and a shrinkage and impoverishment of middle-size *villae*, villages, and urban centers.¹³⁵ The number of slaves and freedmen may have gone down, which may have been caused by a decreasingly specialized agrarian production by tenants.¹³⁶ There are some doubts, though. Those conducting archeological surveys probably missed the location of villages, which means that the Italian countryside was not as depopulated as it seems to have been at first glance.¹³⁷ The production of olive oil, wine, fruits, and vegetables for the city of Rome in the hinterland of the city is less visible in archeological traces than we would have wished.¹³⁸ Vereyke and Vermeulen observe that in the present state of research it is very difficult to estimate the effects of the third-century crisis on land organization, for example in eastern central Italy. There was a revival of the agricultural economy in the fourth century and it was marked by a higher number of occupied large farms or villas, though it is difficult to evaluate the settlement size and impossible to trace the existence of estates made up of multiple farms.¹³⁹

Some scholars think that a symptom of progressive decline in Italy, from the times of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, was the growing number of *curatores rei publicae*. They were appointed by the emperor, through an imperial letter. The tasks of such *curatores* was to restore order to local finances, stamp out abuses, take interest in the restoration of public buildings, and bring back to local communities public property that had been usurped by private persons. Until Marcus' reign most of them had been *equites*, but this emperor started to appoint more senators, probably to lend these *curatores* more social dignity and authority among local notables and over and against senators and knights who owned land in the neighborhood and were encroaching upon communal

land.¹⁴⁰ Quite a few *curatores rei publicae* became patrons of the communities they had been serving.¹⁴¹

There may be another reason, however, why from about the reign of Marcus Aurelius more *curatores rei publicae* were appointed. As was made clear by Andermahr, senatorial landed property was widespread in the regions around Rome, but also in other regions of the Italian peninsula, particularly in the second circle around Rome, that is in the *regio I* (Latium and Campania), Umbria, and southern Etruria.¹⁴² Senators, from wherever they came, were obliged to have land and houses in Italy, preferably near Rome. According to the jurist Paul, they had two domiciles, Rome and their place of origin.¹⁴³ The imperial domains were a competitor too. Patterson convincingly argues that from the first and second centuries AD onwards local public land in parts of Italy tended to be encroached upon by private owners who did not belong to the communities, above all by the emperors and by senators from abroad.¹⁴⁴ This process must have resulted in a loss of communal public land and an undermining of local finances. Appointing *curatores rei publicae* the imperial government tried to counter this undesirable development. If Benet Salway is right, which he probably is, the decurions of Canusium tried to involve a good number of powerful men at Rome, members of the *consilium principis*, as patrons of their city, probably to counterbalance other powerful influences in their own neighborhood.¹⁴⁵

The surprising frequency of *curatores rei publicae* in Italy may also have something to do with the region's function as a logistical hinterland to the Upper and Middle Danube armies. Emperors may have needed them to squeeze more food and commodities out of Italy. The growth in numbers of *curatores rei publicae* in Italy is in my view a sign of increasing tensions between different kinds of proprietors – imperial domains, senators, knights, local gentry, independent farmers, and local communities – under rising logistical pressures. As we have seen above, Italy had become, already under Marcus Aurelius, but certainly also beyond 230, a logistical hinterland of important armies and campaigns. The progressively heavy logistical burdens Italy had to take, in combination with massive imports of olive oil and wine from southern Spain, southern Gaul and especially North Africa, may also have contributed to a rising cultivation of cereals instead of grapes and olive trees. Cereals were ever more in demand, whereas the prices of wine and oil must have become less attractive.

Decay or no decay, in the period 260–275 proprietors in Italy, senators included, must have contributed a lot to imperial war efforts, more than ever. In 268, after Gallienus had been murdered at Milan, senators in Rome lynched his followers and family and put out the eyes of a *patronus fisci*, some functionary of the *fiscus* (imperial treasury).¹⁴⁶ Aurelius Victor, the main source for these events, thinks that the senators hated Gallienus the more because he had barred them from military careers.¹⁴⁷ But mentioning the *patronus fisci*, Victor is pointing at another explanation. This functionary, over-zealously persuing debts to the imperial treasury in court, or harshly requisitioning food, other commodities, and means of transportation, had probably incurred the senators' hatred. Any immunity they may have had must have been null and void in the dangerous situation

that had arisen after Valerian's downfall. Aurelian must have done something similar. In 30.8.8 Ammianus Marcellinus tells us that this emperor swept down on the rich and wealthy like a torrent, without mentioning any relevant details. In 271, many senators seem to have joined the *monetarii* in their rebellion against Aurelian in Rome. Lining their own pockets the revolting *monetarii* had tampered with the fineness of coins issued at Rome, at the instigation of the *rationalis* Felicissimus, as Aurelius Victor tells us (*Caesares* 35.6). Aurelian crushed this revolt with the utmost vigor and harshness, killing many mint personnel and also *plurimos nobiles*, a good number of aristocrats. It cost him, the author of the *Historia Augusta* tells us, 7,000 soldiers who died in the course of the fighting in Rome, and gave him a reputation of cruelty.¹⁴⁸

And what about the city of Rome? It is not certain which demographic developments the *urbs* went through in the third century, but the populace of the city was, like the population of the rest of Italy, certainly diminished by the plague of 252, and also suffered from upheavals such as the clashes between populace and praetorians. From the reign of Severus Alexander to the period of the Tetrarchy there was not much building for display, Aurelian's temple of his sun god being an exception. The same emperor built new city walls, which are still visible today. Like so many towns in Italy and the provinces, Rome had to be fortified again. The reason that the emperor Aurelian could add one ounce to every loaf of bread distributed in Rome, and could add pork, oil, and perhaps wine free of cost, might be that there were fewer receivers by now.¹⁴⁹ That he also distributed olive oil is one sign that trade in this commodity still existed and had not been interrupted by war or chaos for long. Apparently Aurelian could concentrate sufficient quantities to have them distributed among the populace of Rome. Admittedly Monte Testaccio, the enormous heap of pot-sherds caused by this trade, stopped growing from about 267. That dumping sherds upon this mound of pottery waste was not resumed after Aurelian had restored order was probably due to the fact that the mound now lay within the walls.¹⁵⁰ There is no reason to think that the emperor was too poor or weak now to get enough oil into Rome.

The conclusion must be that Italy repeatedly suffered sizeable losses through civil wars, barbarian inroads, epidemics, and the presence of a larger garrison than had been stationed here ever before, in a period of structural change, if not decline. If Elio Lo Cascio is right, Italy and Rome also suffered a demographic decrease. A conjecture may be that Italy was nonetheless contributing supplies to the Danube armies, during the entire century.

The obvious logistical hinterlands of the Rhine armies were of course Gaul and Britain, and, if needs be, the Iberian peninsula. Britain, having three legions and a lot of *auxilia* on its own soil, cannot have contributed much, although Roman Britain seems to have fared relatively well in the third century.¹⁵¹ Bad signs, though, may be that there are no datable building inscriptions between the period of the Gallic empire and the Tetrarchy, that during the same decades building activities mainly focused on town walls and fortifications,¹⁵² and that there are so few epigraphical traces from the period from Caracalla to Carinus of any *iuridici*, procurators, prefects of the fleet, or *tribuni laticlavii*.¹⁵³ The two

provinces of Britain¹⁵⁴ sent *vexillationes* to other parts of the empire. In 215 Lucius Artorius Castus commanded a task force consisting of soldiers from Britain, which belonged to Caracalla's army in the east.¹⁵⁵ Under Gallienus, detachments from Britain served at the Danube border.¹⁵⁶

The Gauls were worse off. Fiscal pressures in Gaul may have been high already under Severus and Caracalla. A Tiberius Antistius Marcianus received as the first one of his kind of functionary an equestrian statue at the Altar of the Three Gauls in Lyon because as a *procurator a censibus* he had behaved so well and modestly.¹⁵⁷ The leading families of the west seem to have suffered setbacks under Severus, after Albinus had been conquered. There was a lot of warfare as well. In 213 Caracalla had to ward off some Alamannic raiders, from 234 to 238 there was serious fighting on the Rhine and subsequently in Germany, and from 256 onwards there were Germanic invasions and attacks, until the emperor Probus brought back some peace to Gaul.¹⁵⁸ Postumus, Victorinus, and Tetricus could not even leave the Gauls to fight Gallienus and his successors, and after Postumus had died his empire of the Gauls became unstable, and probably lost the Iberian peninsula and southern Gaul. In the Rhine region the troops were clearly discontented and did away with one emperor after another pretender. The last emperor of this 'empire,' Tetricus, was bothered by military unruliness, so much so that he betrayed his forces and went over to Aurelian when he got the opportunity to do so.¹⁵⁹ The reason for this military unruliness may have been a lack of supplies, the army still being sizeable, but a good part of Gaul and Spain no longer sending supplies, no longer functioning as logistical hinterlands to the Rhine forces. They had gone over to 'the other empire.'

It seems that the northern parts of Gaul and the Germaniae were badly damaged by prolonged periods of warfare, invasions, and military misconduct. Many sites were fortified in the last quarter of the third century.¹⁶⁰ Patrick Périn observes, on the basis of archeological findings, that as far as northern Gaul is concerned, the Germanic raids of the third century in many places prompted a brutal rupture of the occupation and agricultural exploitation of the land, but has to admit that the most recent archeological research shows more traces of continuous land use into Merovingian times.¹⁶¹ Third-century destructions in this region were followed by an unusually low level of occupation in the fourth century. Only 47 per cent of destroyed sites were reoccupied in the first half of the fourth century. Such a decline in occupation occurred only in northern Gaul, Belgica, and parts of the Germaniae.¹⁶² As has been told above, in chapter 2, the Agri Decumates had been slipping away from Roman control under Valerian and Gallienus.¹⁶³ Under the Tetrarchy, Maximianus had to repopulate the land of the Treveri through a settlement of Laeti and Franci, as Diocletian had brought settlers from Asia Minor to Thrace. Constantius I settled down people in Belgica.¹⁶⁴ Other parts of Gaul were only incidentally hit by barbarian raiding, and could consequently recover in periods between raids.

Not much is known about the Iberian peninsula in the third century. According to John Richardson, there are not many traces of devastation and warfare, but after

235 the imperial cult went into decay, and there was disrepair in cities. Mining was decreasing, particularly in the northwest, and Spain exported less wine and olive oil, for example to the armies of the northwestern regions of the empire.¹⁶⁵ According to Wolfgang Liebeschuetz, the reduction of exports of olive oil from Spain is likely to have been caused by a dramatic expansion of the export of oil from North Africa, especially modern Tunisia.¹⁶⁶ Of course, Spain also had to endure epidemics from 166 and again from 252 onwards, and it may have been under heavy fiscal pressures, especially after many families had supported Albinus. In this part of the empire there may have been an unclear situation as to imperial authority from 268 to 274. Alexandra Chavarria Arnau gives a more optimistic analysis, which is largely based on archeological remains. In her view the extraordinary development of villas, which took place in the Iberian peninsula during the fourth century, must have taken off earlier, and many towns in the third century must have maintained their economic, political, and social structures and prestige. They continued to be preferred places of residence for the notables of the provinces here.¹⁶⁷

In conclusion. Warfare, plunder, deportations, devastations, and uncompensated requisitions by Roman armed forces, bandits, or groups of enemy warriors unavoidably diminished tax returns and carrying capacities of regions that were directly hit, particularly when violence and plunder had become endemic and almost permanent. In the first half of the third century, after the civil wars of 193–197 had ended, tracts of land lying along military transit routes or in actual war zones were repeatedly ransacked, and may have suffered material and demographic damage already. But the emperors and other military leaders could still call upon logistical hinterlands. From 249 to 284, many more regions became war zones and suffered tremendously; in parts of the Balkans, southwest Germany, and northern Gaul even beyond repair. This means that all regions that were still able to contribute to the war effort must have been more heavily taxed, in kind and cash. There was consequently no regionality of crisis. Violence and devastation may not have been equally serious everywhere in the empire, but in the period 249–284 they often were nearly everywhere in the empire, and so were fiscal and logistical pressures and epidemics. Protesting against too heavy burdens, for example in petitions or in the form of land flight, may have been ubiquitous as well. Outside actual war zones, cities may have continued to repair their public buildings, and maintain their shiny outward appearances, but this continuity existed in societies that were under heavy and increasing tensions, even if these did not yet destroy traditional life style.¹⁶⁸ Such tensions existed already under Severus Alexander who in AD 224 wrote to the communities in the empire that he understood that he could not ask more from the cities than they were able to pay and that he was aware that they had been taxed to the limit.¹⁶⁹ Another important symptom of tension at the local level is that in communal life repairing buildings and having games largely superseded erecting new constructions. A contemporary jurist, Paul, living in the later Severan period, formulates in *Dig.* 50.8.7 that unless money was left specifically for a new building, it was to be used for repairing an existing one.¹⁷⁰ Orosius observes that quite a few

towns that had been destroyed in the third century had never recovered and in his own times still remained tiny shadows of once thriving cities, symptoms of sad decay.¹⁷¹

The upshot of this long section of chapter 3 is that the overall fiscal and logistical carrying capacities of the empire decreased in the third century, especially after 249, but also during the preceding two decades that may be characterized as a time of onset of crisis. From 249, but also earlier, productivity and prosperity declined in many regions, which shoved off burdens to other, still prosperous, regions. This development started in a period of financial tensions at the local level. The decline of carrying capacities eroded an important fiscal source of power of the emperors. This leads us to another question: could other sources of income compensate for the deterioration of tax territories? Could the emperors rely more on mining and the production of their own domains, and in this way eke out their income?

3.3. Mining

Another source of imperial fiscal and economic power was mining and the command of stocks of bullion, the basis of imperial coinage, gifts, and display of wealth. In the second, revised edition of his book on mining Domergue describes where mining in the Roman empire was important under the Principate and where it fell into decay in the third century.¹⁷² As was mentioned in the opening section of this chapter, residues and traces of pollution in Greenland ice caused by mining indicate that mining and metal production peaked in the first two centuries of the Roman Principate, but started to fall into decline from the times of the emperor Marcus Aurelius.¹⁷³ In *Ad Demetrianum* 3, bishop Cyprian of Carthage observes that mines and quarries were no longer prolific in his times. His remarks may contain some truth. What was happening to imperial proceeds from mining in the third century? The decline of metal extraction actually occurred in the Iberian peninsula, most clearly in the northwest and the Sierra Morena. Dacia was actually lost under Gallienus, and given up for good under Aurelian. Germanic raiders may have hampered mining in northern Gaul after 256 and especially from 275 onwards, and the Agri Decumates were infiltrated by Alamannic immigrants from about 254. The south of Egypt was being harassed by Nubian tribesmen, the Blemmyes, from the early 250s.¹⁷⁴ Mining in Moesia Superior and other 'Illyrian' provinces outside Dacia seems to have continued at more or less usual levels, though. 'Illyrian' silver production became very important to imperial finances. No wonder that cohorts guarded Moesia Superior mines and that this province came to constitute a stronghold of Roman defenses, with regularly employed mints at Viminacium or Siscia, and a frequently used imperial residence at Sirmium.¹⁷⁵ There is a parallel here with Pannonia Superior, one of the most prosperous and populated provinces of 'Illyricum.' As has been argued above, Gallienus took precautions to safeguard this province.¹⁷⁶ An unsolved riddle is: why did gold ore production in northwest Spain collapse? In the third century emperors dearly needed gold, if only to pay off the Persians or Germanic

raiders. There may have been technical reasons. It seems that hydraulic mines declined first and foremost.¹⁷⁷ John Richardson thinks that a lack of manpower caused by the Antonine plague and military unrest may have triggered the decay of mining in northwest Spain. Domergue is of the opinion that after the *constitutio Antoninana* miners had the right to refuse *operae*.¹⁷⁸ I would like to add that the Antonine plague and the plague of 252 may have decreased the number of workers, increased their wages, and augmented their alternatives, for example in agriculture.

The conclusion must be that mining did not compensate the emperors for losses in tax territories. On the contrary, mining decreased, causing an additional financial problem. Besides the metal stock decreased through payments to regions outside the empire, hoarding, and wear or loss of metal.¹⁷⁹ The decline of mining contributed to the erosion of fiscal and economic imperial power. Unsurprisingly, the emperors debased the imperial coinage, particularly after 249, and grabbed all bullion, gold, and silver they could lay hands on, through confiscations of senatorial property (Septimius Severus, Aurelian), outright requisitioning, even of temple hoards (Maximinus Thrax), fictitious victories that gave emperors the right to raise *aurum coronarium* (Caracalla, Gallienus), and terminating local coinage and subsequently amassing communal stocks of plate (Valerian).¹⁸⁰ Even earlier, but certainly in the third quarter of the third century, the imperial government cannot have been over-successful in mobilizing old stocks of plate. In one of his many publications on third century AD Roman history Michel Christol points at the importance of reminted stock, saying that hoards show that in the course of the debasement of Severus only a limited portion of the usable stock was transformed. Old and new monetary issues circulated together at the same time. He discusses the state's low ability, during sustained situations of tension in the second half of the third century, to access hoarded stock and put it back into circulation. Hoards dating from after the third century contain silver and bronze coins which one might have thought to have been removed completely from circulation.¹⁸¹

3.4. Imperial domains

Unfortunately the extent of imperial domains in Italy and the provinces is not precisely known. So once again we will have to work with qualitative arguments and circumstantial evidence. Imperial domains certainly were an important source of fiscal and economic power in the third century. Many domains did not only contain arable land, pastures, fishponds, and woods, but also mines and quarries. In Africa Proconsularis, one sixth of available arable land may have belonged to the emperor after Nero's confiscations.¹⁸² Alan Bowman makes clear that in Egypt, a relatively well-documented area, imperial and public properties were extensive. In AD 167, 38 per cent of all arable land at Hierakonpolis in the Fayyum was imperial, 29 per cent privately owned, and 33 per cent public.¹⁸³ And the percentage of imperial land may have been increasing. Between 276 and 289, one of the best known estates in the Fayyum, the property of Appianus, also turned into an imperial domain.¹⁸⁴ In recently colonized, not heavily urbanized

parts of Asia Minor, but also in Phrygia and Lydia, there were large tracts of imperial land.¹⁸⁵ Imperial properties must have been widespread in other provinces and in Italy too, but unfortunately there are no reliable quantitative data. In Asia Minor and North Africa an imperial property was managed by a freedman procurator.¹⁸⁶ Parcels of it could be leased to *conductores*. The peasants, mostly tenants, were obliged to yield high percentages of their crops to *conductores* and procurators, and were obliged to do *operae* (corvées) and render services as well. In some territories, groups of domains were put together into an administrative unit supervised by a procurator who resided somewhere at a central place that was situated between domains. In the third century, from Severan times onwards, he would most probably be an *eques*, no longer a freedman. For Asia Minor, Synnada in Phrygia and Euladia in Galatia were such places.¹⁸⁷ According to Stephen Mitchell, administrative units of this type were important local entities in regions in which few administratively well-developed cities existed.¹⁸⁸ Unlike other administrators these procurators stayed in a region for a long time, and as a kind of regional specialists became important in provincial administration. Peter Eich argues that in North Africa imperial domains were exploited by freedmen procurators who were subordinate to a central couple of *procuratores*, a *libertus* and a higher one of equestrian status.¹⁸⁹ The *a rationibus* at Rome may have developed to the status of a top manager of the imperial domains before the fourth century, in Italy as well as the provinces. In Italy the imperial domains may have been supervised by a *procurator a patrimonio* or the *a rationibus*.¹⁹⁰ In the third century, imperial domains already had a (semi-) public status. A function such as imperial domain-procurator could be mentioned in a career inscription.¹⁹¹

The ownership of imperial domains had an ideological connotation. When in 193 a long dynastic line seemed to have broken, and a man from a different family, Helvius Pertinax, obtained the imperial purple, a discussion seems to have started about the relation between his own personal property and the imperial *patrimonium*. In 2.4.7 Herodian tells us: 'Pertinax also gave orders that his name should not be inscribed on imperial property on the grounds that it did not belong to the private estate of the emperor but to the general public treasury of the Roman empire.'¹⁹² This passage, whether true or not, in any case indicates that in Herodian's lifetime discussions were going on about the public character of the imperial domains. Such discussions can be placed within a process of institutionalization of the *patrimonium caesaris*. It is not clear whether the *patrimonium caesaris* and his *res privata* (or *ratio privata*) were identical, or whether – the *patrimonium* developing into a public institution – the *res privata* became the private purse of the emperors, a completely different institution that could exist apart from the *patrimonium*. Anyway, AE 1945, 80, a text which contains information about the career of Marcus Aquilius Felix, one of Septimius Severus' henchmen, tells us that this man was – among others – a *procurator rationis patrimonii* and a *procurator rationis privatae*. The functions are mentioned as different ones.¹⁹³

The imperial domains were a very important source of income and supplies to third-century emperors. At least in Egypt private properties were less heavily

taxed than public and imperial land.¹⁹⁴ On the other hand *conductores* and peasants working on imperial domains were less heavily occupied with local *munera*. In *Dig.* 50.6.6.11 (Callistratus) we read that the *coloni* of Caesar are freed from *munera*, so that they may be more suitable for the cultivation of the estates of the imperial treasury.¹⁹⁵ From *Dig.* 50.5.1.2 (Ulpian) we may gather that there were persons who registered themselves among the tenants of imperial domains in order to escape heavy local burdens, apparently thinking that they would be better off on the domains of the emperor. The situation may have been different from one region to another, though. Imperial domains situated in war zones or their direct hinterlands were undoubtedly taxed heavily, if only because they were the last resort of imperial logistics, whereas inhabitants of imperial domains in relatively quiet areas may have been better off than their colleagues working and living on private properties in the neighborhood of towns and communities demanding many and expensive liturgies.

There are indications that imperial domains in the third century were taxed to the limit, not only by local administrators, but also by their owner, the emperor, who was in need of supplies for his armies. Already in 221 imperial freedmen on a domain near Dura-Europos had to be compelled to give barley to cavalrymen or muleteers who were in the detachment at Apadana.¹⁹⁶ Frisk knows of a complaint handed over to the *praefectus Aegypti* (probably AD 211–212), by a *dēmosios georgos* Stotoëtis from the Fayyum. In the introduction, the only part of the text that is extant, the farmer asks the governor, in the form of a laudatory speech, to protect above all the *georgoi* who are working on the land of the emperor (*i.e.* Caracalla).¹⁹⁷ Quite a few of the third century petitions we know of have to do with complaints forwarded by farmers living and working on imperial domains.¹⁹⁸ This applies to some texts from North Africa, a petition forwarded by peasants on an imperial estate near Philadelphia in Lydia, at modern Aga Bey Köyü in Turkey, dating from the times of Septimius Severus or Philip the Arabian, the Takina files (AD 212–213), and the famous text from Aragua in Phrygia (AD 244–246).¹⁹⁹ In the petition presented by the farmers at Aga Bey Köyü²⁰⁰ they protested that by being prevented from working their land they were unable to meet the demands for imperial levies and services, and threaten to leave the estate and go to some private property, if misbehaving soldiers will not be stopped and punished. The military, probably foraging *stationarii* or *frumentarii*, had allegedly put into custody some nine of the workers of the estate, releasing them only after having exacted a ransom for salvation. They had even killed some others. In the petition forwarded by the people of Takina²⁰¹ there are serious problems with military personnel who are foraging and demanding means of transportation, probably *stationarii* who had been sent ahead. Under Philip the villagers of Aragua in Phrygia complain that they are not close to any military encampment, but nonetheless are harassed by *caesariani* and foraging soldiers leaving the main roads. An earlier petition to Philip, presented to him when he still was a praetorian prefect, had brought no benefit. The farmers now threaten to leave the estate.²⁰² A threat of *anachoresis* again, which is almost a *locus communis* in such petitions.²⁰³ This may have

become a widespread evil and may have resulted in an augmenting number of *agri deserti*, deserted fields. A contemporary writer such as Herodian knew the problem well. In 2.4.6 he ascribes to the emperor Pertinax a remarkable land scheme, telling us that this emperor wished to make over to private ownership all the land in Italy and the provinces, which was not being farmed and was lying completely fallow, even if the land was part of the imperial estates, which may be an exaggerated interpretation of one of Pertinax' ideas. After two decades of widespread turmoil in the empire the emperor Aurelian saw fit to encourage *curiales* to take into cultivation deserted fields (CJ 11.59.1). In *De mortibus persecutorum* 7.1–2 Lactantius, denouncing Diocletian's policies, almost automatically connects the combination of heavy taxation and a massive burden of military logistics with deserted fields.²⁰⁴

In Egypt, public land was traditionally more severely taxed than private properties. Imperial land had to produce heavier taxes as well, in cash and kind. This may be one of the reasons why Egypt had to yield so much: public and imperial properties were widespread and large in this province.²⁰⁵ In Egypt, and probably in other regions as well, imperial estates seem to have developed a bureaucracy of their own, which consumed a good part of the surpluses. As Adams observes, citing relevant papyrus texts:

It is apparent from the accounts alone that many persons wishing to batten onto the estates of the treasury devised titles for themselves, such as administrators, secretaries, or superintendents, whereby they procured no advantage for the treasury, but ate up the revenues.²⁰⁶

In North Africa such developments were countered by leaving the administration of domains to local authorities or by a municipalization of domains.²⁰⁷

Imperial farmers defended themselves against domain *conductores* who were demanding too much. In claiming services, working time, and products, and in hiring out unused lands to farmers, *conductores* who had leased imperial land were obliged to obey the rules that had been established for any given property,²⁰⁸ but they regularly tried to get more out of their *coloni* than their due, until the latter protested to a procurator, governor or even the emperor, threatening to leave their place and stop delivering supplies and services. In some cases petitioners chose a military man as their go-between, apparently estimating that such a person would be able to get himself through to authorities.²⁰⁹ Available evidence suggests that in some cases there was a connivance between *conductores*, domain procurators, and imperial procurators.²¹⁰

In conclusion. There is not enough evidence to make any definite conclusions about growing or decreasing returns of the imperial domains over the third century. An acceptable guess may be, however, that imperial domains lying outside war zones became increasingly important within imperial finances and logistics, particularly in raising the *annona militaris* in kind. This would mean that regions harboring many and widely extended imperial domains, such as Egypt, North Africa, and Asia Minor, but also Italy, were relatively heavily

taxed. The imperial domains being important in military logistics and the raising of supplies in kind, it is even possible that one of the reasons why usurpers donned the imperial purple was to be master of the domains, of one of the main sources of supplies.²¹¹ On the other hand, returns from imperial domains may have been eroded by devastations, wild requisitioning, corruption, and over-bureaucratization. It is not probable that larger profits coming from the domains could have fully compensated for losses in other divisions of third-century imperial finances and logistics.

3.5. Debasement of the imperial coinage

If, after 230, and particularly after 249, more and more tax territories yielded less than before or fell away completely, mining decreased, and agriculture and other economic activities on imperial domains could not sufficiently compensate for these losses, the imperial budget and military logistics could only be repaired through upgrading the *annona militaris* to a regular tax in kind,²¹² requisitioning without much or any compensation, and a debasement of the imperial coinage.²¹³ The combination of those three devices may have undermined imperial authority, particularly in times of imperial defeats and military ill-fortune. Debasement of the imperial silver coinage alone not easily diminished imperial authority. The Roman state manipulated the silver bullion content of the *denarius* coinage with considerable frequency especially when under pressure, and was highly successful in disguising these acts, as Septimius Severus and Caracalla were.²¹⁴ However, after 249 the intensity of the debasement and the combination with more anarchic requisitioning and a heavier *annona militaris* may have altered the picture.

The preceding chapter has paid some attention to the debasement of imperial coinage and other monetary developments in the third century.²¹⁵ Here we summarize these developments. Already in AD 194 the silver content of *denarii* dropped to a new low of 46 per cent.²¹⁶ More coins to one unit of silver provided more money to give to the soldiers in silver coinage. To finance his lavish expenditure, the emperor Caracalla introduced a new coin, called the *antoninianus*, which nominally had the value of two *denarii*, but at a fineness of about one and a half. The weight of the *aureus* was lowered by about 9.3 per cent, from 45 to 50 to the pound.²¹⁷ His successor Macrinus restored the weight of the *aureus* to its pre-215 standard of 7.2 g, and returned to old-fashioned *denarii* with higher fineness, giving up issuing Caracalla's *antoninianus*.²¹⁸ As a consequence, he had to be thrifty towards his army, which cost him the throne and his life. In his first year his successor Elagabalus issued *antoniniani* again, but the minting of this coinage stopped already in 219.²¹⁹ In 238 the minting of *antoniniani* started again.²²⁰ According to traditional opinion, its fineness went from 47.7 per cent in 238–244 to 40.24 per cent in 244–251, 21.86 per cent in 253–255, 11.44 per cent with considerable oscillations in 260–263, and 2.73 per cent in 268–270. In the years 274–282 there was a modest recovery: 4.25 to 4.9 per cent. The *antoninianus* progressively replaced the *denarius*, which from

about 240 onwards was no longer a main current coin. It disappeared between 250 and 274.²²¹

The quality of the main gold coin, the *aureus*, remained unaffected until the mid-third century,²²² but its weight was gradually reduced. Roger Bland shows that by 253 *aurei* generally weighed less than a third of what they had done in 193. The deviation of weights from the average standard started to increase under Severus Alexander. The gold coinage of Severus Alexander set in a trend which is very significant in this respect, which is that the range of weights of individual *aurei* widens greatly. The overall mean weight remains the same as it had done for Elagabalus (6.49 g.), but the coefficient of deviation is now twice as high.²²³ From Trebonianus Gallus onwards gold was minted at so widely different weights that it is impossible to recognize any standard any more. Gold pieces were no longer issued to a consistent standard and shortly after 253 the mint of Rome was to debase the gold coinage for the first time in Roman imperial history. Actually *aurei* ceased to be proper coins. Increasingly, the gold coins that have come down to us today from those times are either pierced or mounted in jewelry. Having become individual lumps of gold, in the third quarter of the third century *aurei* no longer constituted a coin denomination.²²⁴ Aurelian restored the *aureus* as a coin, stabilizing its weight and fineness at 50 to a pound of gold. In the beginning of the fourth century, gold coins were already the main currency. There had been a shift from silver to gold.²²⁵ According to Banaji, conversion to gold was the decisive economic movement of the Late Empire, and it was the state and its impact on the rest of Late Roman society which led to the powerful diffusion of an economy based on gold.²²⁶

The weight of the *aes* coinage carrying the symbol SC (*senatus consulto*) also fell.²²⁷ After an intense production in the second century, the volume of the issues of the Roman mint decreased already under the Severan emperors, to go down completely in the period beyond 249. As Callu observes:

Le deuxième siècle avait connu une production intense de l'atelier de Rome, d'où le faible volume des émissions sévériennes. Lorsque Sévère Alexandre inaugure une seconde phase qui va durer jusqu'à Valérien et Gallien, les caractéristiques en sont différentes: la masse diminue et l'aire se rétrécit. La Bretagne, les Gaules, la Germanie, hors du circuit, vivent sur le stock des Antonins, les régions pannoniennes s'autofinancent. Seules, en définitive, l'Italie et l'Afrique sont encore atteintes par le bronze romain.²²⁸

Not a strange development in a time during which the armed forces' pay was distributed in silver or gold coins, depending on the rank of the receiver.

In regions where local mints existed, for example in Asia Minor and Syria, local bronze coins were frequently used to support payments to passing soldiers. According to Michael Crawford, in Syria alone about 30 towns produced local bronze coins under Severus and Caracalla, probably to help them when they were fighting in nearby regions.²²⁹ After 238 the development of local coinage in the east mirrors the increasing instability there, and testifies to the debasement

of the imperial coinage. Marks and countermarks on local coins that were equivalent to one *sestertius* show that they were originally estimated at 10 *asses*, but later on at 5 *asses*.²³⁰ Valerian changed the system and discontinued local minting, which never recovered from this blow. He may have needed the metals from which local coinage was minted, or the imperial 'silver' coinage that the soldiers were receiving in those days was produced in such quantities and was debased to such a degree that there was no need any more to change it into local bronze small change. This 'small change' may by now have had about as much intrinsic value as imperial silver coinage.²³¹

Why did debasement of the imperial coinage not immediately result in a running empire-wide inflation? One reason is that imperial coinage already had a fiduciary character. As long as imperial monetary authority was generally trusted, debasements of the imperial coinage did not necessarily need to result in a serious inflation of prices.²³² Of course there were regional and local price fluctuations, for example in war-ravaged areas and heavily taxed hinterlands, but all-encompassing running inflation, in all parts of the empire simultaneously, only set in under Aurelian.²³³ What Aurelian actually did to trigger this development is not clear. He seems to have introduced a new silver denomination, sometimes called *aurelianus*, and he put the mark XX 1 on these coins, which seems to mean that he wanted people to accept the *aurelianus* at a value of 20 *antoniniani*.²³⁴ From 238 onwards, and especially beyond 260, *antoniniani* had been produced in ever more mints, and must have been struck in rapidly augmenting quantities, which may have undermined confidence in the imperial coinage at least as much as debasements were doing.²³⁵ In a relatively short period of about two decades the quantity of 'silver' coins, still the main currency, if only because the soldiers were still receiving their pay in it, must have greatly swollen, and their intrinsic value had collapsed, not just decreased. Aurelian's new coins probably came as a kind of acknowledgement or admission of these mutually intensifying developments, precisely during the later phases of a prolonged period of plague. Such periods are characterized by upward pressures on prices, as had happened at the end of the Antonine plague in the last decades of the second century.²³⁶ Besides, increasing quantities of coin issues, added to a proliferation of mints, made it easier to tamper with standards or produce counterfeit. When the emperor Aurelian tried to stop malpractices at the mint of Rome, a violent rebellion of fraudulent *monetarii* and their senatorial accomplices immediately followed.²³⁷

Egypt had a monetary position of its own. The province maintained its own traditional coinage, having the tetradrachm as its main denomination. From AD 176/177, until about 260, it was issued at 8 per cent silver and 12 g, but from then onwards Alexandrian tetradrachms suffered the same rapid deterioration as the *antoninianus*.²³⁸ In Egypt the need remained to change imperial money and local coins from outside Egypt for Egyptian coins, although there were transactions in imperial money. P. Oxy. 59, 3979 (26 September 266) is a business letter which also serves as a note of credit for the transfer of funds, *i.e.* a sum of 900 drachmas in imperial money. About 260 there were some difficulties. In P. Oxy. 12, 1411 (AD 260), a notice issued by the *strategos* Ptolemaeus, also

called Nemesianus, ordering bankers and all other persons engaged in commercial transactions to accept the new imperial coinage, read:

Since the public officials have assembled and have accused the bankers of the exchange banks of having closed them because of their unwillingness to accept the divine coin of the emperors, it has become necessary to issue an order to all the owners of the banks to open them and to accept and exchange all coins except the absolutely spurious and counterfeit – and not alone to them but to those who engage in business transactions of any kind whatever.²³⁹

Apparently Egyptian banks no longer trusted new imperial money, which implies that they no longer placed complete reliance on imperial monetary integrity or on the stability of the political authority backing it.

Massive amounts of coins reached the armed forces, but coins reached also the higher orders, the most important trading cities, people who sold something to the military, builders, architects, administrators at all levels of society (private and public), people outside the empire, and all kinds of random persons within it. Coins were representatives of the emperor, whose image adorned the obverses. When Jesus in St. Matthew 22: 19–21 is discussing taxes and governmental power with the Pharisees, he takes a *denarius* as a common, accessible symbol to show what belongs to the emperor, what is in the latter's power.²⁴⁰ As Hekster, Kemmers, and Manders have shown,²⁴¹ coins sent to specific armed forces were carrying propagandistic images and texts to them that suited those units well. But if such coins were no longer generally trusted and accepted, what about the imperial representation they were showing, and what about acceptance of this representation among the main receivers of those coins, the armed forces?

3.6. Conclusions

The economic-carrying capacities of the empire undoubtedly decreased in the third century, especially after 249, but also during the preceding two decades. This caused more problems because this development started in a period of financial tensions at the local level. This decline of carrying capacities eroded an important fiscal source of power of the emperors and put into jeopardy their permanent access to money, food, and other commodities. It could not be compensated for by increasing returns of mining and larger profits harvested from imperial domains. On the contrary, many domains ran into trouble as well, and in some parts of the empire mining had started to decline. The only viable recourse was to increase the volume of imperial coinage, simultaneously debasing individual coins, but this could put imperial authority at risk. In the long run any emperor who wished not only to repair frontier defenses but also to extend the number of soldiers and fortifications beyond what had been standard before the period of crises, would unavoidably have to reorganize and augment taxes in cash and kind, and put up with the social and administrative consequences.

Notes

- 1 On the impact of the state on production and trade in the Roman empire see Kehoe in Bowman and Wilson 2013, 33–53.
- 2 On Cyprian and his dark view of third-century history see Alföldy 1989, 295–318.
- 3 Jongman in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 188, referring to De Calataŷ 2005. Jongman returns to this subject in a recently published article, Jongman in Eich, A. *et al.* 2017, 35–55, in which he expands his data to trends in demography, archeological findings in the north of Gaul, the Rhineland, and Italy, the use of wood and coal in Germany and Britain respectively, and animal bones. His conclusion is the same: high economic activity from the Late Republic to the times of Marcus Aurelius, and a steep decline thereafter. See also Wilson in Bowman and Wilson 2009, 213–49. On p. 219 he puts into perspective the significance of numbers of shipwrecks, saying that they are to a certain extent nothing else than an indication of amphora usage, because wrecks are spotted under water usually by the mound formed on the seabed by their cargo (often *amphorae*).
- 4 Jongman in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 189. See Hong *et al.* 1996, 246–9; Lo Cascio 2003, 11; De Calataŷ 2005, 370, and esp. Domergue 2008, 212f., 214.
- 5 Jongman in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 190. Even Christian Witschel, who is not a strong believer in a third-century crisis, admits: ‘Im späteren 3. Jahrhundert erlebte Rom eine weitgehende städtebauliche Stagnation, da zwischen der spätseverischen und der diokletianischen Zeit ein deutlicher Rückgang der Neubauaktivitäten zu verzeichnen ist (Witschel 2001, 120).’ He points out that towns in the Roman empire from the third century were looking differently because they all now had a smaller but better fortified nucleus (Witschel, *ibidem* 157). In the Introduction to their volume on quantifying the Roman economy Alan Bowman and Andrew Wilson point out that it is taken as a clear indication of economic trouble that in Africa and the western provinces new public building programs decline dramatically after Alexander Severus until well into the fourth century (Bowman and Wilson 2009, 52).
- 6 Duncan-Jones 2004, 20–52, esp. 27–32.
- 7 Nappo in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 237.
- 8 See Jongman in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 195–7; idem in Eich, A. *et al.* 2017, 51. Jongman leaves aside the critical article published by Christer Bruun; see Bruun in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 201–17. Bruun criticizes a lot of the evidence produced by people who published on the effects of the Antonine plague.
- 9 See ch. 1, p. 8.
- 10 The *vicesima libertatis* and *vicesima hereditatium* had before 212 been paid by Roman citizens. On these taxes in Italy see the survey in Eck 1979, 114–24 (*vicesima libertatis*) and 125–44 (*vicesima hereditatium*). On third century taxes and taxation see the valuable introduction by Corbier in CAH XII² 2005, 360–75.
- 11 On the development of the *annona militaris* under Septimius Severus see ch. 2, p. 43.
- 12 Scheidel and Friesen 2009, 75. See also Lo Cascio in Kolb 2006, 32f. Bang 2008, 86–91 estimates the GDP of the Roman empire, at 60 million inhabitants, as 30m tons of wheat equivalent or 13.7 bn sesterces, for a per capita mean of 500 kg or 229 sesterces, somewhat lower than the Scheidel and Friesen 2009, 74 estimates of c.680 kg or c. 260 sesterces. Unfortunately, all such estimates are highly speculative. See Bowman and Wilson in Bowman and Wilson 2009, 12.
- 13 See *Dig.* 50.6.6.11 (Callistratus): The *coloni* of Caesar (the emperor) are freed from *munera*, so that they may be more suitable for the cultivation of the estates of the imperial treasury (*coloni quoque caesaris a muneribus liberantur, ut idoneiores praediis fiscalibus habeantur*). They were not explicitly forbidden to fulfill *munera*, though. In *Dig.* 50.1.38.1 we are told that Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus issued a rescript to the effect that it was right for tenants of estates of the imperial treasury (*coloni praediorum fisci*) to perform *munera* provided the imperial treasury

did not suffer and that it fell to the governor in association with the procurator to examine the issue.

- 14 See Mouritsen 1998, 249f. (expansion of town councils in Italy). On the ban on shifting off local burdens to *georgoi* instead of liable *bouleutai* see P. Mich. 9, 529 (AD 232–236), with Husselman's commentary, and PSI 12, 1243. On local *munera* see Dig. 50.4.18 (Arcadius Charisius). He mentions *munera personalia* and *munera patrimoniorum*, personal *munera* being *curatela*, care of the public account book, the production of recruits or horses or of any other animals, the conveyance or accompaniment of goods, such as money belonging to the imperial treasury, the provision of care or clothing (*pecunia fiscalis sive annona vel vestis*), *angaria* (the providing of means of transportation), *cura emendi frumenti/ olei*, the supervision of aqueducts, the office of the *irenarchs*, who are in charge of public order and the regulation of behavior (*qui disciplinae publicae et corrigendis moribus praeficiuntur*), road-building if it is not counted as patrimonial *munus*, supervising the provision of bread, organizing the corn-supply (*annona*), and raising the poll tax. In 50.4.18.9 curators who are regularly chosen to collect the public revenues of the various communities are also counted as persons who are fulfilling personal *munera*. Particularly heavy burdens were the providing of means of transportation and the lodging of military and other government personnel. See Kolb 2000, 59f.
- 15 Lo Cascio in Kolb 2006, 33f.
- 16 Roth 1999, 116–55, esp. 154f.; 238. On supplying the armies see also Mitthof 2001, 37–81, esp. 78–81.
- 17 In *Alexander Severus* 45.2 and 47.1 the author of the *Historia Augusta* sketches the ideal logistical situation in this way: (45.2) 'He (Severus Alexander, depicted as the ideal prince) always kept secret the plan for a campaign, but announced openly the length of each day's march; and he would even issue a proclamation two months beforehand, in which was written: "on such and such a day, and at such and such an hour, I shall depart from the city, and, if the gods so will, I shall tarry at the first halting – place." Then were listed in order all the halting-places, next the camping-stations, and next the places where provisions were to be found, for the whole length of the march as far as the boundaries of the barbarians' country.' (47.1) 'During his campaigns he made such careful provision for the soldiers that they were furnished with supplies at each halting-place and were never compelled to carry food for the usual period of 17 days, except in the enemy's country. And even then he lightened their burdens by using mules and camels.' This *Vita* may be considered a late fourth century AD 'mirror-of-princes,' but this description of military logistics also applies to earlier imperial periods. Adams in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 288f., referring to P. Panop. Beatty 1 and 2, makes clear that provisioning *mansiones* (stopping places) in Egypt was an important task for local and regional administrators.
- 18 Adams in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 289f.
- 19 Speidel M.A. 2009, 490–3.
- 20 De Blois in idem 2002, 210f.; idem in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 499ff.
- 21 See Sijpesteijn 1992, 238f.
- 22 Cassius Dio 80.1.1.
- 23 Anonymus Continuator Dionis FHG IV p. 197, frg 10.4.
- 24 See Eich, A., in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 120–7.
- 25 See Hauken 1998, 203–14 (AD 193, a letter by Pertinax and the provincial governor to Tabala about soldiers turning off the prescribed road and demanding all kinds of things), 215f. (a petition from Euhippe in Asia against soldiers turning off the road and demanding commodities and services, AD 211–213, see also Malay 1988, 47–52), 217–43 (a complaint from Takina in Phrygia, AD 212–213, against soldiers demanding commodities and services, see also Sahin and French 1987, 133–42);

- Herrmann 1990, nr. 4 = Hauken 1998, 74–139 (CIL suppl. 12336 = IGR I 674 = Sylloge 888, a petition to Gordian III from Skaptopare, situated between two military camps, against all kinds of military misconduct); Herrmann 1990, nr. 6 = Hauken 1998, 140–61 (OGIS 519 = IGR IV 598, AD 244–246, a petition to Philip from Aragua, situated on an imperial domain in Asia, against soldiers leaving the main roads and harassing the village). Such petitions were not a new phenomenon in the third century. In 159–160, for example, the inhabitants of Dagis, a village near Histria, turned to the governor of Moesia Inferior with similar complaints about the heavy burden of requisitioned transport; see SEG XIX 476, Hauken 1998, 170–8; Kolb 2000, 126. The petitions that Hauken treats are also discussed by Mitchell 2001, 229–33 and idem in Eck 1999, 17–46, esp 41 (list of known petitions of this type). On the petition by the villagers of Skaptopara see also Connolly 2010, 27–38 and Manders and Hekster 2011, 154f. This text was handed over by a soldier in the praetorian guard, Pyrrhus, who was also a landed proprietor in Skaptopara. On this petition and the text found in Aga Bey Köyü see also Hekster 2008, 33f. and 118–22.
- 26 Mitchell and Waelkens 1998, 11.
- 27 Speidel, M.A., in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 49–51. Cf. idem in Kolb 2014, 91.
- 28 This was an illegitimate act. See Speidel, M.A., in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 49–50, referring to Dig. 1.18.6.6 (Ulpian).
- 29 See AE 2000, 1463.
- 30 Eich, A., in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 123.
- 31 Erdkamp 1998, 240.
- 32 See Vereyke and Vermeulen 2009, 118. Cf. Arthur in Christie 2004, 103–33.
- 33 Mithof 2001, 78 (at the beginning of the conclusions ending his chapter on the *Heersversorgung* from Septimius Severus to Diocletian): ‘Während Marschverbände im 2. Jh. noch auf lokaler Ebene auf der Grundlage von je nach Bedarf durchgeführten Proviantankäufen bzw.-requisitionen erpflegt wurden, ging man erstmals unter den Severern dazu über, bei solchen Gelegenheiten provinzweit Sonderabgaben unter dem Titel *annona* auszuschreiben; seit Caracalla wurden auf diese Weise bei grösseren militärischen Unternehmungen sogar provinzübergreifend Proviantmittel requiriert.’
- 34 P. Thmouis 1. See Kambitsis 1985, 17–31.
- 35 See Dig. 50.2.1 (Ulpian).
- 36 Dig. 19.2.55.2 (Paul): ‘Qui contra legem conductionis fundum ante tempus sine iusta ac probabili causa deseruerit, ad solvendas totius temporis pensiones ex conducto conveniri potest, quatenus locator in id quod eius interest indemnitas servetur.’ See also Dig. 19.2.24.2 (Paul).
- 37 Cassius Dio 71.21.1.
- 38 Cosme 2009, 207.
- 39 See AE 1993, 1231b, the Augsburg inscription, in which deportees from Italy are mentioned. See Bakker 1993, 375 and 377. On deportations from Thrace and Moesia Inferior, for example after the fall of Philippopolis in 250, see De Blois 2017b, 42–54.
- 40 See Bosworth 1999, 30 note 94. He uses an Arabian source, the work of Al-Tabari.
- 41 RGDS 16: ‘And men of the Roman empire, non-Aryans, we (king Shapur I) deported. We settled them in the empire of Iran in Persia, Parthia, Khuzistan, in Babylonia and in other lands where there were domains of our father, grandfathers, and our other ancestors.’ See Potter 2004, 224f. On p. 225 he points at the chronicle of Se’ert, compiled in AD 1034, which also remembers the arrival of prisoners to regions of the Persian empire. This source is a Nestorian chronicle from a far later period but it uses a good source – Daniel bar Mariam who lived from 647 or 657 onwards. See Gagé 1965, 316 and De Blois 1976, 185 with note 43. Quite a few of the exiles seem to have been Christians.

- 42 On Maternus and his ‘army’ of robbers, deserters, and barbarians who had stayed behind see Shaw 1984, 44ff.; Alföldy 1989, 69–80 (*Bonner Jahrbücher* 171 [1971], 367–76); Grünewald 1999, 155–95, and Hekster 2002, 45 note 32, and 65–7.
- 43 Cf. Isaac 1984, 171–203. On such escalations and de-escalations see Grünewald 1999, 49–81.
- 44 Cassius Dio 76.10.5, about imperial slaves and freedmen in the band of Felix Bulla. See Alföldy 2011a, 243.
- 45 See Roueché 1981, 113–17 ap. nrs 7 and 8; Mitchell in Eck 1999, 39, 43; Mitchell 2001, 121ff.; 227–40, esp. 228. According to Dise 1997b, 284–94, esp. 293, in the Rhine and Danube areas there were more than four times more *stationes* than in North Africa and the east (see also Ott 1995, 90–100), but this observation may partly be dependent on a difference in the intensity with which *stationes* have been excavated or explored in different areas. According to Faure 2013, I, 128 *stationes* manned by *beneficiarii* had a function in putting down banditism; they had a function in policing the countryside.
- 46 See SEG 49, 1999, nr. 2413. An interesting example of such problems at a local level in Asia Minor (at Tyana) is given by Philostratus in his *Vita Apollonii* 1.15.
- 47 P. Dura 64 (ed. Perkins 1959) reflects difficulties of requisitioning in 221; P. Dura 129 (AD 225) shows how groups of soldiers were employed to purchase barley from an imperial domain; they needed to compel the imperial freedmen there to give it to them. These *testimonia* come from the quiet period under Severus Alexander!
- 48 See *Dig.* 50.11.2; 50.4.1.2 (*cura frumenti comparandi, cura arcae frumentariae*); 50.4.3.12; 50.4.18.8; 50.4.18.25; 50.8.2.2 (Ulpian): ‘if anything has been converted to another use from the corn account, it is to be returned with the proper interest to its proper account’; 50.8.2.3 (Ulpian): ‘a debt to the corn account is to settle as soon as possible from his own resources’; 50.8.2.6. From *Dig.* 50.4.18.29 (Arcadius Charisius) we may gather that practically no one was exempted from providing corn, *angariae*, and post-horses, and from billeting. It says: ‘Whether, however, exemption is granted to anyone only from personal *munera* or also from civil *munera*, they cannot be excused from the provision of corn (*annonae*) or of *angariae* or of post-horses or from billeting or from the provision of a ship or from the collection of the poll tax, except for soldiers and veterans.’ However, Septimius Severus and his son Caracalla freed senators from the obligation of *hospitium* (billeting government persons, military included). See Drew-Bear *et al.* 1977, 355–83, esp. 365–77. *Dig.* 50.10.2 suggests that also certain intellectuals, called *liberalium artium professores*, were exempted from billeting and *angaria*.
- 49 On Egypt being heavily urbanized see Bowman 1986, 141f. On third-century AD North Africa see Witschel in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 145–221.
- 50 See above, p. 95. Those invasions from the north, northwest, and east caused a lot of damage. See Radt 1988, 50f.; Mitchell 2001, 214–17, 227–40.
- 51 Mitchell 2001, 213–17, 235; Nollé in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 277–83.
- 52 Waddington 1910, 507, nr. 846. See Mitchell 2001, 213, 235; Nollé in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 280.
- 53 Lane Fox 1986, 539ff. See Gregorius Thaumaturgus, *Epistula Canonica*, canones 1–11, in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca* 10, Paris 1857, 1019–47, esp. 1037ff. See De Blois 2001c, 118.
- 54 See L. Robert, *Hellenica* VI 117ff., nr. 48.
- 55 See Brandt 1992, 160–2.
- 56 Hauken 1998, 69. Mitchell 2001, 232 makes clear that *kollektiones* were tax collectors, *frumentarii* had to do with supplies, and *stationarii* with policing, but the functions of the groups may very well have overlapped.
- 57 See Hauken 1998, 58–69.
- 58 See Sahin and French 1987, 133–42; SEG 37, 1987, 374–7, nr. 1186; Millar 1992, 646; Hauken 1998, 217–43; Eich 2005, 304f.

- 59 See Rostovtzeff 1957, 652f., note 1, and 713, note 16; Herrmann 1990, 34–7; Hauken 1998, 35–43; Mitchell in Eck 1999, 44; Eich 2005, 299.
- 60 See OGIS II 519 = IGR IV 598 = CIL III 14191. See Herrmann 1990, 28–33, nr. 6; Hauken 1998, 145–8 (Greek text) and 148f. (translation into English). See also Körner 2002, 181–9; Eich 2005, 121.
- 61 Hauken 1998, 162–8. *Enochlesis* is hindrance, *eispraxis* is collection of goods or money.
- 62 Hauken 1998, 247–50. Cf. idem 1998, 244–6, a not well datable text from Demirci, a village in Lydia, and 251–6, a petition from Güllüköy, a village in Lydia (Herrmann 1990, 15 note 27, nr. 11, 2nd or 3rd century AD).
- 63 Mitchell 2001, 139.
- 64 Mitchell and Waelkens 1998, 11.
- 65 Forced recruiting on the way to a front is mentioned already in a petition by the people of Tabala to Pertinax (AD 193); see Malay 1988, 47–52, and Hauken 1998, 203–14. In this text people complain about soldiers turning off the highway, to plunder and demand all kinds of things, as well as recruits.
- 66 Millar 1993, 149, referring to AE 1972, nrs 625–8. Cf. Pollard 2000, 203.
- 67 Mitchell 2001, 234. In his publication in Dabrowa 1994, 146–7, Mitchell says: ‘From the time of Augustus to that of the Severi the regime proved extraordinarily successful in curbing the emergence of private armies. The ferocious and unswerving hostility, indeed the ideological war which was waged against all forms of banditry and brigandage are testimony to this determination. But the line began to break down in the mid-third century. Dramatic events, such as the Pisidian uprising under the emperor Probus, are spectacular symptoms of the central authorities losing control.’
- 68 ILS 8870 = IGR III 481. See Roueché 1981, 116, and Mitchell 2001, 234.
- 69 Roueché 1981, 113f., nrs 7 and 8. In nr. 7 (p. 113) a *centurio frumentarius* called Aurelius Gaius is praised because he had conducted himself decently and bravely in the province of Asia, and thanked for his goodwill and affection. In nr. 8 the same formulas are used to praise an anonymous military man. Gaius had probably been sent to Asia directly from the *castra peregrina* in Rome. The activities of such *frumentarii* in provinces such as Asia were mainly policing and keeping the peace (Roueché 1981, 115), and so were largely comparable to those of *stationarii*. On p. 115f. Roueché mentions IGR IV 301, in which text Aurelius Dionysios, *hekatontarchos regeonarios*, is praised by the city of Antioch in Pisidia *anti biou pollôn kai tês eirênês*. Roueché also cites two late third century texts, TAM III 1, nrs 80 and 82 (Termessus maior), in which two more *praepositi* are attested, and TAM III 1, 88 (Termessos, Pisidia, not earlier than Gallienus’ times) in which L. Aurelius Marcianus, *dux*, is praised as *eirênês prostatês*. The latter text was discussed and re-edited in Christol 1978, 529–40. On Marcianus see also Mitchell 2001, 234.
- 70 Roueché 1981, 103–6 (relatively strong representation of Valerian and Gallienus); 113–17, esp. 117.
- 71 Zosimus 1.69–70. See Mitchell 2001, 234f.; Kreucher 2003, 150–5.
- 72 See Brandt 1992, 149f. (Pamphylia and Pisidia); Ruffing in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 237f. (Ephesus until about 260, Side in Pamphylia).
- 73 See Mitchell 2001, 214–17. On Nicaea see above, p. 140. On Ephesus Scherrer in Koester 1995, 15 observes: ‘The building activities of M. Fulvius Publicianus Nikephoros, the last great donor of Ephesos for more than a hundred years, took place during the reign of Severus Alexander or Maximinus Thrax.’ On the decay of the ‘epigraphical habit’ see MacMullen 1982. On town *curatores* see Mitchell 2001, 228: from about 230 *curatores* were appointed in quite a few towns in Asia Minor. See Burton 1979, 465–87, esp. 482f. On the basis of Burton’s investigations one may conclude that in Asia Minor regional aristocrats, in local status comparable with status set senators in Italy, were selected to be city curators. Like those senators they had the ascendancy to impress local notables.

- 74 See Eck 1979, 190–246; Lepelley 1998, 26ff.; Papi 2004, 63; Burton 2004, 311–42. On *curatores r.p.* in communities in Asia Minor see Burton 1979, 465–87. In *Dig.* 50.4.18.1 and 9 a *curatela* of this type counts as a personal *munus*. A *curator rei publicae* was not allowed to exploit *praedia publica* in his community, see *Dig.* 50.8.2.1 (Ulpian). A *curator r.p.* was allowed to order restitution to be made to an owner of the value of grain removed wrongfully after a purchase which is made for the public account, he could farm out parcels of public land (*Dig.* 50.8.5 [Papinian]), and he could reclaim public land (*Dig.* 50.8.11.2). Ulpian wrote a book about the tasks of a *curator rei publicae*, called *De officio curatoris rei publicae* (*Dig.* 50.9.4). Apparently governors were also involved in demanding back public property, possibly through *curatores*. In *Dig.* 50.10.5.1 Ulpian writes: ‘It is not right for public property to be held by private individuals. So the governor of the province will take care to separate whatever is public property from private and thus increase public revenue.’
- 75 Roueché 1981, 103f., nr. 1, a dedication to Salonina at Aphrodisias.
- 76 Alcock 1996, 48f., 215ff., 219ff.
- 77 Isaac 1990, 309f.
- 78 Cf. P. Dura 46, 55, 63, Perkins 1959, 6.
- 79 Sartre 2005, 343–63 (historical events from 229 to 273); 272f. See Dodgeon and Lieu 1994, 57–67.
- 80 Hauken 1998, 179–87, esp. 184–6.
- 81 Crawford 1975, 560, 566; Butcher 2004, 41–7.
- 82 Sartre 2005, 207–11.
- 83 See Millar 1993, 225–488 *passim*; Duncan-Jones 2004, 38f.; Liebeschuetz in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 433–7. Similar positive developments characterized areas in southern Palestine, see Lewin in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 463–80.
- 84 Sartre 2005, 272f.
- 85 HA *Aurelianus* 26.1: *sed in itinere a latronibus Syris male accepto frequenter exercitu multa perpessus est* (but frequently on the march his army met with a hostile reception from the brigands of Syria). There is some doubt, however, because the *Historia Augusta* is the only source here, but this is factual information that may come from a good source.
- 86 See Millar 1993, 180–9.
- 87 Adams in Swain and Edwards 2004, 99. See Bowman 1986, 77. On levels of agricultural production in parts of Egypt see Bowman in Bowman and Wilson 2013, 219–53. Egypt was throughout an important supplier of grain and other commodities, and an equally important taxpayer.
- 88 See Speidel, M.A. 2009, 256f.
- 89 Bowman 1986, 74–6; Alston 1995, *passim*, esp. 86–96 (centurions involved in administration, the receiving of petitions and other actions in Egypt).
- 90 See Adams 1976, 241f.; Carlà 2007, 93. In note 71, referring to BGU 1, 266 and other papyri, Carlà says: ‘I papiri Egiziani registrano, anche per il regno di Caracalla, esazioni esplicitamente indicate come destinate alla Siria.’ P. Oxy 12, 1443, AD 227, a report of *sitologoi* to a *strategus* of the Antaeopolite nome, contains reports of arrears and receipts of corn, and mentions extra burdens on top of standard amounts.
- 91 See Bowman 1986, 71f.
- 92 P. Beatty Panopolis 1, 221–4. See Adams in Swain and Edwards 2004, 82–108; Lee 2007, 85f. See also Adams in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 281–91, discussing P. Panop. Beatty 1 and 2.
- 93 Ruffing in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 223f. He seems to believe, incorrectly, that prosperity even lasted until about 270. Real wages, that is compared to prices, were higher in the third century than in the first and second centuries. See Johnson 1936, 303f.; idem 1950, 158; Drexhage 1991, 440–54. Adams in Swain and Edwards 2004, 85

- does not see much of a crisis in late third and fourth century Egypt. In his publication on the Heroninos Archive, Dominic Rathbone sketches a thriving society, not threatened by crisis or decay (Rathbone 1991), but this does not mean that this society was not under heavy fiscal pressures. Nor does it make clear that in the whole of Egypt the situation was like that.
- 94 Problems with liturgies: P.Oxy. 4437 (c. 229–236 or 237); SB XVI 13050 (236); SB XX 15170 (238–244); P.Leit. 16 (cf. P.Leit.4–9 and 13); P. Oxy. 2854 (248); P. Erl. 18 (248); P.Lond.inv. 2565 (SB 7696) (250). On problems regarding tax collection and payment of taxes see P.Oxy. 890 (3rd cent., probably 234–238); P.Wisc. II 86 (244–246); P. Mich. IX 529. Many farmers were taxed for land that they did not till nor possess (P.Wisc.II 86, AD 244–6, cf. P.Oxy.42, 3050).
 - 95 See Banaji 2001, 111. On p. 115 he hypothesizes that in the third century still 52 per cent of all selected landowners were members of the *boulai* in Egypt.
 - 96 On wages, rents, and land prices in post-plague periods see Duncan-Jones 1996, 121–4; Scheidel 2002, 97ff., 104. On prices and wages in post-plague Egypt see Ruffing in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 223f., referring to Johnson 1936, 303f.; idem 1950, 158, and Drexhage 1991, 440–54.
 - 97 See P. Oxy. 1413–1416.
 - 98 Edicts of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, by which they tried to prevent the pushing off of burdens to *georgoi* and the attribution of liturgies simultaneously or without pause to one person, were often quoted or cited in papyrus texts. See P. Oxy. 1405, 3105, 4437; P.Flor. III 382; PSI I 807 (280); P.Mich. IX 529 (on ll. 93–106 of this text see T.C. Skeat and E.P. Wegener, *JEJ* 21 [1935], 237). Cf. Dig. 50.1.18 (Paul). See Lewis 1975, 202–6.
 - 99 Bowman 1971, 121–3; idem 1986, 67–71.
 - 100 See above, ch. 2, p. 63. See Parsons 1967, 134–41, and his comments to P. Oxy. 42, 3046–50. Cf. P. Wisc.2, 86 (AD 244–246); P. Oxy. 1, 78. See Körner 2002, 238–41; Bowman in CAH XII² 2005, 318f., and Palme in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 192–208.
 - 101 Palme in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 197.
 - 102 See *Oracula Sibyllina* 13.42ff. See Oost 1961; De Blois 1978–1979, 20, and Körner 2002, 274ff. On p. 275 the latter suggests that the sedition that occurred in Alexandria at the end of Philip's reign had something to do with Philip's reforms.
 - 103 See above, p. 89. See Hartmann 2001, 278–89; idem in Johnes 2008, I, 360f.; Kreucher 2003, 155–7; Lohwasser in Johnes 2008, I, 577f.
 - 104 See Adams in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 284ff.
 - 105 See above, p. 136 and p. 141.
 - 106 Mrozek 1977, 95–109.
 - 107 Dušanec 1977, 63–79. Cf. Domergue 2008, 209–11 and 215.
 - 108 See Ott 1995, 90–100 (129 *stationes* in the Rhine and Danube areas, and just 29 in the east and North Africa together); Dise 1997b, 284–94, esp. 293 (the Rhine and Danube provinces contained more than four times the number of *stationes* found in North Africa and the east). Evidence about soldiers and officers serving at supply stations along transit routes is provided by Speidel, M.A. 2009, 257–60 and 269.
 - 109 See Mócsy 1977, 563–5.
 - 110 Alföldy 1974c, 169ff., 171ff.; Winkler 1977, 233.
 - 111 Cf. Mackensen 1999, 200ff.
 - 112 See De Blois in idem and Lo Cascio 2007, 501.
 - 113 Mócsy 1974, 263–5.
 - 114 See Speidel, M.A. 2009, 367, 371 (table 4), and 380 (table 7). Cf. Mócsy 1974, 236.
 - 115 Poulter 2007, 9–11.
 - 116 See Poulter in De Blois 2002, 244–59; idem in Christie 2004, 223–53, esp. 242–7.

- 117 See *Panegyricus Latinus* 8.21.1. This passage informs us that the Tetrarchs did similar things in the country of the Treveri, by settling Laeti and Franci there, and in Belgica. See Drexhage *et al.* 2002, 309.
- 118 See Liebeschuetz 2015, 425ff.
- 119 See Herodian 7.4–9, esp. 7.4.2f. and 7.5.1–8. See above, p. 58.
- 120 Kreucher 2003, 144f. On North Africa in the third century AD see Lepelley 1998, 71–112; Witschel in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 145–221. Cf. De Vos in Bowman and Wilson 2013, 143–218 (concentrating on the entire imperial period and on the region of Thugga).
- 121 In *FHG* IV 187, frg 9 Petrus Patricius relates that Valerian was afraid of being defeated by the Persians because the plague had decimated his forces, particularly the Moorish, *i.e.* North African, troops. His successor, Gallienus, also had North African soldiers in his army. See Simon 1980, 437. There had been North African units at the northern and eastern borders in earlier days too. In Severan times Cn. Pompeius Pompeianus was prefect of a *cohors Afrorum* in Dacia (CIL VI 3529, cited by Devijver 1976, P 64). Q. Petronius Quintianus had, as a military tribune of the *cohors IX Maurorum Gordiana*, served in Mesopotamia (Devijver 1976, 639, P 28).
- 122 On these *correctores* see Giardina 1993, 55; Porena 2003, 61. Suetrius Sabinus, who was one of Caracalla's first *correctores*, is called *electus ad corrigendum statum Italiae* in CIL X 5398 = ILS 1159. He was one of the emperor's trusted friends. Sabinus was the first in a line of *correctores*. See Giardina 1993, 58–62. On Suetrius' career see Peachin 1996, 101–6.
- 123 See Lorient 1975, 674, referring to CIL V 7889 and 7890 (AD 235–6). See also AE 1919, 256–7; AE 1953, 31; AE 1979, 256–7; AE 1999, 397. According to Millar in Cotton and Rogers II, 2004, 387, recruits from Italy were called up only when new military units were created in or near Italy, for example under Septimius Severus and Maximinus Thrax.
- 124 See Dobson 1978, 322f., nrs 234 and 235.
- 125 Cassius Dio 76.10. See Shaw 1984, 44–52 (Maternus and Felix Bulla); Grünwald 1999, 155–95; Bingham 2013, 155 note 248.
- 126 ILS 509 = CIL XI 6107 (Petra Pertusa/ Intercisa, Umbria, near the Via Flaminia, AD 246, a dedication to Victoria): 'Aurelius Munatianus, evocatus ex cohorte VI praetoria pia vindice Philippiana agens at latrunculum cum militibus numero viginti classis praetoriae Ravennatis piae vindicis Filipporum.' See Körner 2002, 233f.
- 127 ILS 2768 = CIL IX 334. In 253 in Egypt this man was *epistrategos* of Heptanomia (P. Oxy. 3109). See Salway 2000, 139.
- 128 CIL VI 3836 = 3177. Cf. IGR I 137 (the same title in Greek).
- 129 See above, pp. 60f., 66, 71.
- 130 Verona: ILS 544 = CIL V 3329 (AD 265). Milan: De Blois 1976, 28f.; 31f.; Hartmann in Johnes 2006, 85f.
- 131 Millar in Cotton and Rogers II, 2004, 397f.
- 132 The emperor Probus, for example, went from Augsburg to Illyricum through the Po Valley; see Kreucher 2003, 147f.
- 133 As John Drinkwater observes: 'The threat posed to Italy by Elbgermanic peoples was small. By Aurelian's reign the Alamanni had ceased their raiding and the harm done by the Iuthungi was relatively minor and confined to the north. After Aurelian's victories, the peninsula suffered no further barbarian incursions until the early fifth century. The raiders were not migrating tribesmen but bands of young warriors exploiting current Roman weaknesses to win fame and booty.' See Drinkwater 2007, 77. Cf. Cosme 2009, 206.
- 134 Duncan-Jones 1996, 127, figs. 10 and 11. According to Bruun in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 209–14, this phenomenon cannot be ascribed to the Antonine plague alone, there are other reasons as well.

- 135 See Duncan-Jones 2004, 27–32; Papi 2004, 53–81; Witschel 2004, 261–5; Lewit 2004, 20; Marzano 2007, 231f.; Hekster 2008, 34.
- 136 Scheidel 2005, 64–79, esp. 79; Alföldy 2011a, 244; cf. Carrié and Rousselle 1999, 528ff.
- 137 Witschel 2004, 263. In his article in Neil Christie’s volume, Paul Arthur remarks that it is very difficult to chart the gradual shrinkage of Roman towns in Italy because large-scale excavations or the sort of information available from Gaul are still lacking. See Arthur in Christie 2004, 104f.
- 138 See Marzano in Bowman and Wilson 2013, 101.
- 139 Vereyke and Vermeulen 2009, 117.
- 140 See Eck 1979, 190–246, esp. 227. A prosopography of *curatores rei publicae* was published by François Jacques (Jacques 1983). See also Lepelley 1998, 26–8; Papi 2004, 62f. See *Dig.* 50.8 (Ulpian), on the administration of property belonging to communities. Ulpian wrote a book *De officio curatoris rei publicae*. According to *Dig.* 50.4.18.9 *curatores* were regularly chosen to collect the public revenues of the various communities.
- 141 See for example ILS 5014, 5017, 6268, 6616, and 6623.
- 142 Andermahr 1998, 43–60.
- 143 *Dig.* 1.9.11 (Paul). Cf. *Dig.* 50.1.23 pr.
- 144 Patterson 2006, 209–11.
- 145 Period of Severus Alexander. See Salway 2000, 115–71, esp. 160–71. See CIL IX 338 (the *album* of Canusium).
- 146 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 33.31: ‘At senatus comperto tali exitio satellites propinquosque per scalas Gemonias praeceps agendos decrevit, patronoque fisci in curiam perducto effossos oculos pendisse satis constat.’
- 147 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 33.33–4.
- 148 See Eutropius 9.14; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 35.6; HA Aurelianus 21.5, 38.1–2, 39.8. In 1.49.2 Zosimus mentions just a conspiracy of senators, no revolt of *monetarii*.
- 149 See HA, Aurelianus 17.1 and 18.1.
- 150 <http://archaeospain.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/current-world-archaeology-testaccio.pdf> (consulted 19 February 2015). See Lo Cascio in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 204f.
- 151 See Salway 1981, 263–80, esp. 280; Drinkwater 1987, 203, 206, 214; Southern 1998, 220; Witschel 2004, 272f.; Birley in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 48 and 54. Ken Dark observes that early fourth-century Britain was characterized by widespread wealth and a proliferation of villas. See Dark in Christie 2004, 281–5.
- 152 Birley in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 52f.
- 153 See Birley 2005, 337.
- 154 Two indeed, since the times of Caracalla. See Birley 2005, 333–6.
- 155 See Birley 2005, 355.
- 156 See ILS 546 = CIL III 3228 (times of Gallienus, *vexillationes* from Britain on the Danube). See Keppie in Le Bohec 2000, 31ff.; Witschel 2004, 272f.; Birley in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 49.
- 157 See Devijver 1976, 104, A 127, referring to CIL XIII 1680 = ILS 1390, c. AD 200.
- 158 See above, p. 95.
- 159 See above, p. 88.
- 160 Goodman 2007, 203ff.; Haas 2006, 106–4. *Agri deserti* are mentioned by the authors of *Panegyricus Latinus* 6.1–8; cf. 8.8.4, 8.9.1, 8.21.1.
- 161 Périn in Christie 2004, 272.
- 162 Lewit 2004, 20f. See also Duncan-Jones 2004, 32f.; Haas 2006, 101–9; Goodman 2007, 200ff.; Le Bohec 2008, 297–301.
- 163 See above, pp. 74, 94.

- 164 Drexhage *et al.* 2002, 309, referring to Panegyrici Latini 8.21.1.
- 165 Richardson 1998, 251–6. Cf. Witschel 2004, 266.
- 166 Liebeschuetz 2015, 57 (in his article ‘Unsustainable development,’ previously published in De Blois and Rich 2002, 232–43).
- 167 Chavarria Arnau in Christie 2004, 71 and 85–8. Cf. Le Roux 2001, 59.
- 168 De Blois in *idem* and Rich 2002, 207f.
- 169 See P. Fay. 20, June AD 224. On the date of this text see Oliver 1978, 474–85.
- 170 *Dig.* 50.8.7 (Paul): ‘Nisi ad opus novum pecunia specialiter legata sit, vetera ex hac reficienda sunt.’ Building and repairing were considered *munera publica*. See *Dig.* 50.4.4.pr (Ulpian): ‘Cura exstruendi vel reficiendi operis in civitate munus publicum est.’ On repairing buildings and having games superseding the erection of new constructions see Wilson 1990, 183–5 (in relatively peaceful Sicily); Koester 1994, 14f. (Ephesus after the Severan period); Winter 1996, 191f., 236 (everywhere in the Roman empire); Richardson 1998, 254f. (Spain); Lepelley 1998, 103 (North Africa beyond 230, referring to Dupuis 1992, 233–80); Mitchell 2001, 214 (Asia Minor: fortifications, roads and military installations instead of fine prestigious buildings) and 217–25 (games); Witschel in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 155–62 (even in North Africa decreasing building activities, more repair, continuity of games). Scherrer in Koester 1995, 15 observes: ‘The building activities of M. Fulvius Publicianus Nicephorus, the last great donor of Ephesus for more than a hundred years, took place during the reign of Severus Alexander or Maximinus Thrax. His halls contained areas reserved for different corporations of artisans.’
- 171 Orosius 7.22.8: ‘Exstant adhuc per diversas provincias, in magnarum urbium ruinis, parvae et pauperes sedes, signa miseriarum et nominum indicia servant, ex quibus nos quoque in Hispania Tarraconem nostram a consolationem miseriae recentis ostendimus.’
- 172 Domergue 2008, 209–14 (mining culminating during the first two centuries of the Principate; data coming from Greenland ice); 214–18 (‘La fin des mines antiques’). On mining in the ancient Roman world see Orejas 2001, dossiers I–VIII.
- 173 See above, p. 132.
- 174 On those political and military events see above, ch. 2, pp. 94f. On the decay of mining see Domergue 2008, 214–18. See also Howgego 1992, 6–8; Richardson 1998, 252f. (Spain); Wilson 2002, 27–9.
- 175 On mining in Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia, and Moesia Superior see Dušanec 1977, 52–94. On Dacian mining see Mrozek 1977, 95–109. See Mócsy 1974, 216f. and 223f. (mining in Upper Moesia).
- 176 See above, p. 74.
- 177 Wilson 2002, 29.
- 178 Richardson 1998, 253; Domergue 2008, 215f.
- 179 Corbier in *CAH XII*² 2005, 353–60.
- 180 See above, pp. 43–7, 52, 57, 76, 180.
- 181 Christol 2003b, 109–24, esp. 122–4.
- 182 Eich 2005, 290, note 5, referring to Plinius Maior, NH 18 (7) 35; Cordovana 2007, 147 refers to the same passage. On imperial domains in North Africa see *idem* 2007, 147–207, esp. 162f.
- 183 Bowman 1986, 77f.; 95. In the Fayyum Appianus’ estate seems to have become imperial property between 276 and 289 (see Rathbone 1991, 403).
- 184 Rathbone 1991, 403. On the so-called ‘Heroninus-archive’ and Appianus’ estate see Rathbone 1991.
- 185 See Mitchell 2001, 151–60.
- 186 On domain procurators and other administrative domain personnel see Weaver 1972, 272–80; Eich 2005, 290–314.
- 187 Mitchell in Eck 1999, 37–46; *idem* 2001, 148–64. See also Strubbe 1975, 229–50; Sartre 2005, 207–11.

- 188 Mitchell in Eck 1999, 29f., 37–46, speaking of less densely populated areas and relatively recently colonized regions in Asia Minor. In Egypt domains could have comparable functions and statuses. See Rathbone 1991 (on Appianus' estate), 388–409, esp. 404.
- 189 Eich 2005, 292–7, esp. 297. On the administrative history of the different kinds of procurators and domain personnel in North Africa see Christol 2006c, 219–46.
- 190 Eich 2005, 309–12. On the *a rationibus* as top functionary in the procuratorial system in the third century see idem 2005, 184–7, esp. 187.
- 191 Weaver 1972, 270. See Devijver 1976, 785f., T 24, L. Titinius Clodianus, CIL VIII 8328, AE 1912, 132, AE 1941, 175, Cuicul, and CIL 8329, AE 1918, 85, Lambaesis. After four militiae he was among others *a commentariis* of two praetorian prefects, *procurator XL portus Asiae et Bithyniae C*, *procurator patrimoni partes praesidis agens provinciae Numidia C*, *praeses et procurator of Epirus*, *praeses et procurator of the Alpes Maritimae*, *procurator hereditatium ducenarius*, and *ludi magni duce-narius* (AD 247).
- 192 In his commentary Whittaker argues that earlier emperors, such as Nerva, had acted likewise. See Whittaker 1969, I, 161 note 3.
- 193 Cf. CIL X 6657 = ILS 1387. See Dobson 1978, 278. Much is unclear, though. Eich 2005, 179, note 1 says: 'Die Untersuchung kaum einer kaiserzeitlichen Institution ist mit so vielen Problemen behaftet wie die der *res privata*. Weder steht der Zeitpunkt der Einführung dieser zusätzlichen Kasse fest, noch lassen unsere Quellen eine materiale Ausdifferenzierung der kaiserlichen Finanzen zu.' On the basis of HA *Severus* 12.4 one could presume that the *res privata* as an imperial office started to function under Septimius Severus.
- 194 Bagnall 2000, 288–92.
- 195 *Dig.* 50.6.6.11 (Callistratus): 'Coloni quoque caesaris a muneribus liberantur et idoniores praediis fiscalibus habeantur.' *Quoque* hints at the preceding paragraph, 50.6.6.10, where we are told that contractors who have leased the right to collect revenues of the imperial treasury (*conductores vectigalium fisci*) are not bound by the necessity of undertaking municipal *munera* and that this rule was stated in a rescript of the deified brothers, *i.e.* Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.
- 196 P. Dura (ed. Perkins 1959) 64 (AD 221).
- 197 Frisk 1975², 78–81.
- 198 Hauken 1998; Mitchell in Eck 1999, 39–44, esp. 41.
- 199 See Hauken 1998, 3–24 (texts from the *tractus Karthaginiensis* in North Africa, from Ain Wassel, dated under Commodus, and Ain el Djemala), 35–56 (Aga Bey Köyü), 140–61 (Aragua), 217–43 (Takina). See Eich 2005, 294f. (text from Ain el Djemala).
- 200 See Keil and Von Premerstein 1914, nr. 55, 37–47; Herrmann 1990, 34–7; Hauken 1998, 35–41; Mitchell in Eck 1999, 44; Eich 2005, 299.
- 201 See Sahin and French 1987, 133–42; SEG 37, 1987, 374–7, nr. 1186.; Millar 1992, 646; Hauken 1998, 217–43; Eich 2005, 304f.
- 202 See OGIS II 519 = IGR IV 598 = CIL III 14191. See Herrmann 1990, nr. 6, 28–33; Hauken 1998, 140–61; Körner 2002, 181–9; Eich 2005, 307f.
- 203 As it is in P.Oxy. 3, 507 (AD 169) and P.Oxy. 4,705 (AD 200–202).
- 204 On the problem of *agri deserti*, deserted fields, see Duncan-Jones 2004, 23–6 (*agri deserti* and taxation). In his view land falling out of cultivation was a recurrent problem, and resulted from a permanent struggle between a tax-hungry state and vulnerable cultivators. See also Haas 2006, 101.
- 205 See Bowman 1986, 77f.; Duncan-Jones 1994, 47f., 63.
- 206 Adams in Swain and Edwards 2004, 84, referring to P.Oxy 1, 58 (AD 288),
- 207 See Witschel in Johne *et al.* 2006, 154; Cordovana 2007, 149f.
- 208 See Kehoe 1988, 37ff.; De Ligt 1998–9, 219–39. On p. 239 he concludes about one of those regulations, the *lex Manciana*, that it was a *lex locationis* that laid down regulations for the cultivation of the unused parts of privately owned estates in North

- Africa, and that not long after its creation (mid-first century AD) this *lex* began to be used on imperial estates.
- 209 See Hauken 1998, 148, OGIS II 519 = IGR IV 598 = CIL III 14191 (petition forwarded by the villagers of Aragua in Phrygia), ll. 2–4. This petition was presented by a soldier called Didymus. See Hauken 1998, 95, Sylloge³ II 888 = IGR I 674 = CIL III 12336 (petition forwarded by the villagers of Skaptopara in Thrace), ll. 6–7: this petition was presented by Pyrrhus, a soldier of the tenth praetorian cohort, a landed proprietor at Skaptopara.
 - 210 See Kehoe 1988, 55–63 and Hauken 1998, 3–24, esp. 14, referring to CIL VIII 26416 (a text from Ain Wassel in North Africa, dated under Commodus).
 - 211 Hartmann, F. 1982, 169 argues that usurpations could be brought about by soldiers who wished to have the emperor near at hand or in their midst (German: *Kaisernähe*). That is an unduly emotional argument. In actual fact he was the man who could better than anyone else requisition food and produce the coins necessary to pay *donativa*. That was what mattered.
 - 212 On the development of the *annona* out of requisitions see Cosme 2009, 223–5.
 - 213 Debasement of the silver coinage may also have become necessary, however, because the supply of raw silver had been declining.
 - 214 See Ponting in Bowman and Wilson 2009, 275.
 - 215 See above, pp. 44, 46, 76. Much attention has been paid to these matters since many decades. To mention only five fundamental older publications: in 1969 appeared Callu's impressive work on the monetary policy of the Roman emperors between 238 and 311, in 1975 were published a summary of Callu's conclusions in the *ANRW* as well as Crawford's 'Finance, coinage and money from the Severans to Constantine.' In 1990 appeared Carson's *Coins of the Roman Empire* (Carson 1990, 61ff.), in 1996 Bland's 'Development of Gold and Silver Coin Denominations, AD 193–253' (Bland 1996, 63–100), and in 2005 Corbier's articles in the second edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History*. See also Lo Cascio 1993, 259–78; Duncan-Jones 1994, 20–32; Harl 1996, 126–48; Carrié and Rousselle 1999, 84f., 127ff.; De Blois 2002, 215f. For publications preceding Callu's work see De Blois 1976, 87f., note 243. Walker's Metrology (Walker 1976–1978), for a long time the basis of many numerical data, has been criticized by Gitler and Ponting 2003, 11–51, at least as to Severan times. A concise survey is given by Verboven in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 245–57. Nonetheless Walker's work remains important. In Bowman and Wilson 2009, 288, Christopher Howgego points out that Walker's absolute results have been shown to be inaccurate but the trends he charted are in general being vindicated by recent publications.
 - 216 Gitler and Ponting 2003, 7. Cf. Corbier in CAH² 2005, 333 and 339.
 - 217 See Crawford 1975, 565f.; Bland 1996, 68; Carrié and Rousselle 1999, 85; Corbier in CAH XII² 2005, 333; Verboven in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 247.
 - 218 Bland 1996, 69.
 - 219 See Bland 1996, 75f.; Corbier in CAH XII² 2005, 334.
 - 220 Crawford 1975, 565f.
 - 221 The survey of decreasing percentages of silver was borrowed from Carrié and Rousselle 1999, 127. Mireille Corbier in CAH XII² 2005, 334 estimates the fineness of the *antoninianus* of 238 at 43–47 per cent, at a weight of 4.5–4.75 g. Her opinion is that the weight and silver content of the *antoninianus*, which became the commonest denomination, fell by very little before 250, but that the decline then accelerated. On the proliferation of coins and mints see Corbier, *ibid.* 344–51. About the reintroduced *antoninianus* and its development from 238 onwards Callu 1975, 602, says: 'Pesant grosso modo 4,40 g., titrant environ 43 %, il est produit par six officines (238). Trente ans plus tard, il ne pèse plus que circa 2,80 g., titre à peine 2,5 % mais une trentaine d'officines le fabriquent.' On p. 604 he says: 'Le volume des

- frappes s'est multiplié environ par sept, la période cruciale se situant entre 266 et 274.'
- 222 Verboven in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 248.
- 223 Bland 1996, 69; Verboven in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 248.
- 224 Bland 1996, 64–74; Corbier in CAH XII² 2005, 334; Verboven in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 248f. On the demonetization of the *aurei* see Callu 1975, 611. He points out that Caracalla minted 50 *aurei* from one pound of gold, and Philip already 70. An *aureus* of Gallienus had at average $\frac{1}{4}$ of the weight of an *aureus* of Caracalla. In the period 268–286 there was some recovery to 60 *aurei* a pound.
- 225 Corbier in CAH XII² 2005, 343, 352f. (shift from silver to gold).
- 226 Banaji 2001, 37.
- 227 Corbier in CAH XII² 2005, 334.
- 228 Callu 1975, 599.
- 229 Crawford 1975, 560, 566. Cf. Sartre 2005, 249–58.
- 230 Callu 1975, 598.
- 231 See Callu 1975, 597; Ziegler in Kennedy 1996, 119–34; Butcher 2004, 261–4. Cf. Nollé in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 284. For the reasons those emperors may have had to do so, see above, ch. 2, p. 76.
- 232 Ando 2000, 221f. points out that imperial authority was at stake. Counterfeiting the imperial coinage was a kind of sacrilege, and imperial money ought to be accepted at face value.
- 233 See Lo Cascio 1984, 147f. (no direct connection between inflation and debasement of the coinage in Egypt); idem 1997, 161–82, esp. 164; Duncan-Jones 2004, 43–7; Verboven in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 256.
- 234 On Aurelian's monetary reforms see Corbier in CAH XII² 2005, 340f.
- 235 On augmenting quantities of *antoniniani*, especially under Gallienus, see also Duncan-Jones 2004, 44–6.
- 236 See Lo Cascio 1997, 168ff. According to Dominic Rathbone serious structural price inflation befell Egypt from 160 to 190, and from 274 onwards; see Rathbone in Andreau 1997, 183–244, esp. 190, 215f. See also Scheidel 2002, 104 (rise in prices in Egypt, last decades of the second century). Unfortunately Scheidel's data almost exclusively come from one source, the administration of the Appianus estate in the Fayyum. See Bagnall 2002, 114–20, esp. 120.
- 237 See above, p. 89.
- 238 Verboven in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 247.
- 239 Translation borrowed from Bowman 1986, 92. Corbier in CAH XII² 2005, 325 briefly mentions this text, saying that the idea that there was a serious price-inflation already well before 274 leans too heavily on this single text. The text is not about price-inflation, though, but about a refusal to accept imperial money because of its low intrinsic quality, and thus about accepting imperial authority at face value.
- 240 In St. Matthew 22, 19–21 Jesus says to some Pharisees: 'Show me the tribute money. And they brought him a *denarius*. And he saith unto them, whose is this image and superscription? They said unto him, *caesar's*. Then he said unto them, render therefore unto *caesar* the things which are *caesar's*, and unto God the things that are God's.'
- 241 See Hekster and Manders in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 136; Kemmers 2005; idem 2006. See also Hekster in De Blois *et al.* 2003, 20–35.

4 Sources of military and political imperial power, AD 193–284

4.1. Introduction

This chapter is about the foundations of Roman imperial military and political power in the period from 193 to 284. To maintain their monopoly of violence, keep the enemies out, react to petitions, maintain order in the various parts of the empire, and raise sufficient means to pay the armed forces and meet all other imperial expenses, the emperors needed loyal military personnel, faithful and efficient middle and higher military cadres, a reliable personal bureaucracy, and networks consisting of senators, *equites*, and local *potentes*. Prerequisite conditions for exerting political and military power successfully were as ever effective leadership at the top and acceptance among the higher orders in society, the armed forces, and the public at large. In the third century, political and military power had to be applied in a situation of declining material resources, and increasing external and internal pressures on the Roman imperial system. Through which changes and adaptations did the emperors try to meet the challenges that came their way?

4.2. Sources of military power

The bond between ruler and soldiers had always been important, and had always found its expression in the oath of loyalty (*sacramentum*) and various rituals.¹ In the greeting formula of some of his messages Octavian stated that he was in good health, together with the army, a formula that seems to be older than the Principate.² Effectively exerting military power largely depended on an emperor's authority over the armed forces, on the quality of armies and fleets, and on a sufficient quantity of soldiers. It is not certain that Roman soldiers of the third century were vastly superior over their opponents. In 80.4.1 Cassius Dio still thinks that during the rule of Severus Alexander the Persians were not very strong themselves but became a danger to the Roman empire because the Roman armies of the east were in a miserable state and did not know any discipline. The wars that the Persian kings Ardashir I and Shapur I waged against successive Roman emperors, however, showed that the fighting qualities of the Persian armies were hardly inferior to those of the Roman forces. The Romans could only hope to win if they assembled armies that were larger than those of their Persian opponents.³ The

Roman forces suffered defeats and setbacks in the Balkans too, as was told in chapter 2. The emperor Decius was aware that his Gothic opponents were really formidable. In his letter to the soldiers and civilians of Philippopolis, who were fighting Gothic forces that beleaguered them, the emperor Decius wrote that they should not be over-confident and should not make any reckless sorties against an able and dangerous enemy who has a large cavalry and many heavy and light infantry units at his disposal.⁴ This was not the tone of an emperor who is confident of his military superiority. At the Balkan front and in Asia Minor Roman forces regularly had to be helped by local militias who were prepared to assist the emperor, if only to prevent being thoroughly plundered.⁵ From the years of the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus onwards, large parts of Italy, Gaul, and even Spain and North Africa had to reckon with devastating invasions that only with great difficulty could be stopped by Roman forces and emergency militias.⁶ There undoubtedly was a quantitative problem too. Under Severus Alexander and Maximinus Thrax losses still were compensated by recruiting new soldiers, and similar things may have happened on the eve of the great Persian campaign of Gordian III but it is not at all certain that sufficient recruiting took place during the years of crisis, between 249 and 268. About 260 the garrisons of many camps along the Rhine and Danube frontiers must have been depleted, as was suggested above.⁷ There is one slight indication that during the 270s recruiting took place again on a larger scale. In *Caesares* 37.2 Aurelius Victor tells us that the new pretender (and soon emperor) Probus was known for being good at drilling recruits. Anyhow the military power of the emperors who reigned from 249 to 271 was not sufficiently strong, which opened the gates to usurpers, invaders, and brigands. Besides, not all emperors were able to keep in hand local militias and independently operating allies, such as Palmyra.

Controlling the soldiers may have become more hazardous than it had been before 193, since Septimius Severus and his successors up to Maximinus Thrax had substantially increased military pay and thus had enhanced military self-confidence,⁸ whereas military working-conditions deteriorated. After 230 ever more soldiers had to face dangerous actions, long marches, unhealthy conditions, and logistical misery, which undoubtedly increased their frustrations if the imperial government did not in a timely manner improve the situations in which the military were finding themselves.

Military misconduct looms large in the works of contemporary and later authors who write about the third century. If we believe Cassius Dio, Herodian, and some other literary sources, managing and controlling the military was a hazardous and extremely difficult task, which nonetheless should be carried out by the emperors. Dio regarded armies as the main source of power, and he branded soldiers as a naturally rapacious and rebellious species that is difficult to control. And yet controlled it must be, for otherwise the *res publica* of a legitimate monarchy or a republican government will degenerate into a military tyranny, in which the ruler will become a plaything of military upstarts and the social order threatens to be turned upside down. In Dio's view there is a great risk of this taking place when the government or the ruler loses dignity, when

the community is weakened by discord, civil strife or struggles for power or when a despotic or uneducated ruler regards the armies as his personal retinue and spoils them at the expense of the rest of the population.⁹ Dio was convinced that the Roman world in which the emperors performed was characterized by a hierarchical social order, in which the senators were on top and the soldiers should know their place.¹⁰

Herodian is in no way less negative about the Roman soldiery.¹¹ Several times Herodian connects soldiers with tyranny (2.5.1; 2.6.2; 4.13.7; 7.1.3f.). In his view, the soldiers were a dangerous, greedy group that was difficult to keep under control and rather supported a tyrant who gave them everything they wanted than a good but strict emperor (2.5f.; 5.2.3ff.; 6.7f.; 7.1; 7.3; 8.8.1ff.). He saw them morally deteriorate from the end of the Antonine period. In a passage on the murder of Pertinax and the 'sale of the emperorship' to Didius Iulianus, 2.6.14, Herodian writes:

This was the first time that the soldiers' characters gradually began to be corrupted. They learned to have an evil and insatiable lust for money and to ignore any feeling of respect for their emperors. The fact that there was nobody to take revenge on the perpetrators of this savage murder of an emperor, and nobody to prevent the shameful auction and sale of the empire, was a prime cause in the development of a shameful state of indiscipline that had permanent consequences for the future. The ever-increasing avarice of the soldiers and their contempt for authority had developed to the extent of murder.

Avaritia militum (soldiers' greed) is also explicitly present in later literary sources. In *Caesares* 26.6 Aurelius Victor calls soldiers a 'genus hominum pecuniae cupidius fidumque ac bonum solo quaestu',¹² and in a laudatory speech on abolishing the armed forces the author of the *Historia Augusta* sketches the utopian situation that would ensue: no more *annona (militaris)*, no more military pay, no taxes, no camps, no weapons, and no civil wars.¹³ Aurelius Victor and the author of the *Historia Augusta* are fourth-century AD authors, and may have been thinking about their own times, but it is equally possible that they found something to this effect in their sources.

In a mid-third-century literary source, the oration *Eis Basilea* by ps.-Aelius Aristides, which is addressed to the emperor Philip,¹⁴ we read that many have had the experience of proving themselves brave in the face of the enemy, but of being ruled by their own soldiers. By limiting their needs, however, the emperor he addresses made the troops better, and commanded and marshaled the soldiers. He did not give them limitless donatives, and had no fear of terrifying soldiery. He no longer permitted them to turn their attention to plunder but made military drill habitual with them. He did not allow them luxury and wantonness. In this way he made the revenues more secure. There could be no better proof of his courage and good judgment than these facts (30). In 31 the author adds that controlling the troops and persuading them to curb their

desires demonstrates the emperor's skill and wisdom, and shows that he surpasses everyone in intelligence and eloquence.¹⁵ In this author's opinion, ruling the soldiers was difficult indeed! The author of the *Historia Augusta* would have agreed. In his biography of Septimius Severus, 8.9, he tells us that right after this emperor had departed to the east he had to face a mutiny in his army, which arose on account of the place selected for pitching camp. If this is right, his troops were really quick to take to rebellion.

That ruling the soldiers *was* difficult is indicated by some epigraphic texts, mentioned above, containing petitions about military personnel harassing villages or towns.¹⁶ Some of those texts demonstrate that answers of governors, procurators, praetorian prefects, or even emperors to petitions about military misconduct were of no avail, already well before the years of crisis beyond 249. In some cases emperors shifted off petitions and ensuing actions to provincial governors, apparently not trusting their own authority, and being unwilling to suffer loss of face. Of course all this implied an erosion of imperial power, which was the more serious, if the rescripts involved had stipulated that the answer to the petition should be published on a good, frequently visited place, as a kind of *apotropaion* against more military harassing.¹⁷

Managing the military had to do with regular military pay, donatives, other handouts, military logistics, organizing support among the soldiers, and good actual leadership resulting in tangible victories. Under the Severan dynasty and Maximinus Thrax military pay was repeatedly increased, as was told already in chapter 2. How military pay developed after 238 is not certain. According to Mark Hebblewhite, after 235 donatives and *praemia militia* became more important than regular military pay, which lost much of its real value.¹⁸ It is not certain either what the numbers of the receivers were. If indeed many camps and fortresses were undermanned during the years of crisis, the imperial paymasters would have had fewer receivers of military pay. Donatives were a normal phenomenon at the beginning of any reign, and at special occasions such as victories and decennial celebrations.¹⁹ According to Duncan-Jones, the amounts involved were a sizeable extra benefit to the military, which came on top of their annual pay. Until the reign of Severus Alexander, the costs to the emperors' coffers tended to be ever larger from one emperor to the next.²⁰

Money was indispensable for anyone who was about to usurp the imperial power. Emperors who behaved niggardly, or unnecessarily thriftily, towards the military, ran a risk to be dethroned and killed, unless they were exceptionally able military leaders. There are many examples of emperors and usurpers who tried to obtain the loyalty of the military through financial liberality, even if they could not afford it, and had to raise the money they needed in all kinds of ways. In a fragment of book 71 Cassius Dio tells us that Marcus Aurelius had to sell all kinds of valuables from his palace to raise funds out of which he paid the soldiers. In 193 Pertinax had to act in a similar way (Dio 74.5.4f.). In the same year Didius Iulianus lost his life because he was not sufficiently rich to give his soldiers everything they were expecting from him.²¹ Septimius Severus and his son Caracalla were accused of giving too much to the soldiers,

acquiring the necessary money by confiscations and through debasements of the imperial coinage. Cassius Dio accused Caracalla also of other devices, such as raising of *aurum coronarium* on illegitimate grounds and promulgating the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, which in Dio's view was aiming at fiscal profits.²² Maximinus Thrax was seen as a typical tyrant who plundered his own realm to give money to the soldiers, whose pay he had doubled. Whether the emperors who ruled after 238 increased military pay is not known. They debased the currency, probably to spread the available bullion over more coins, which they needed to give donatives and regular pay to the military. Gallienus compensated his military cadre in yet another way, giving them better coins and medallions than other people were getting.²³ To obtain sufficient means, he issued coins with numbered victories, which at least partly must have been fictional.²⁴ Every victory gave him the opportunity to raise *aurum coronarium*. Aurelian, also needing lots of money, seems to have swept down on the rich and wealthy like a torrent, to quote a line written by Ammianus Marcellinus.²⁵

Well-organized military logistics were important as well as pay and handouts. Lack of food and other commodities could result in military uprisings, followed by usurpations of imperial power. From Septimius Severus onwards there was a regular *annona militaris*, to the advantage of military logistics, which undoubtedly contributed to the stability of Severus' reign.²⁶ There were contrary examples. In 238 Maximinus Thrax did not prepare well the logistics of his march to Italy, and so his soldiers had to face starvation during the prolonged siege of Aquileia. In the end they rose in rebellion and killed their emperor. For all his military successes in Germany, Maximinus paid a fatal price for neglecting his supply structures.²⁷ In 244 the emperor Gordian III and his army, after their defeat at Misiche, were confronted with a lack of supplies as well. The result was that Gordian lost his throne and his life, and that his army accepted Philip as their emperor in his place. In some literary sources the new emperor, who had been responsible for the logistics of the campaign, was accused of holding back supplies in order to elicit a military rebellion, through which he could usurp imperial power.²⁸

However, there was more to it than just money and logistics. To manage or manipulate their men, military commanders needed the co-operation of their higher and middle cadres to organize support for their initiatives. Pescennius Niger and Septimius Severus in 193 showed awareness of this. In 2.7.7 Herodian relates that Niger, after he had decided to put all his hopes on becoming emperor, as a first measure summoned the legionary commanders, military tribunes, and more distinguished soldiers in small groups into his private residence, where he discussed the subject with them and tried to get them over by telling them the news he was receiving from Rome. In Rome the urban *plebs* had been taking action against the soldiers there, without much avail, and had been shouting that Niger should help them. In 2.9.7 the same author tells us that the first thing Septimius Severus did after he had decided to make a bid for the imperial purple was to make overtures to small groups of legionary commanders and tribunes and senior centurions, discussing with them the ruinous state of the empire, which had been brought about because there was no noble or worthy leader to control it.²⁹

The military middle cadre also played an important role in 218. On the eve of the battle at Immae, near Emesa, some centurions and lower ranking cadre tried to keep the soldiers loyal to Macrinus and indeed their soldiers started to hesitate, but the bribes and dynastic arguments of their opponents were decisive. Being annoyed by what they saw as Macrinus' indolence, military incompetence and niggardly behavior, and seduced by Julia Maesa's money and dynastic propaganda, the soldiers went over to Elagabalus and his advisors.³⁰ In such cases, when the middle cadre officers became estranged from the rank and file of their army, they had little chance of being successful in decisively influencing their men. In 1.21.2 Zosimus tells us that Philip in 249, on the eve of Decius' usurpation, was aware that the soldiers of the Balkan armies loathed their middle cadre officers, their *taxiarchoi* and *hègemones*. This situation worried Philip, probably because this meant that these soldiers could not be held back from rebellion by their own higher and middle cadre.³¹

Like Septimius Severus, the emperor Gallienus was aware of the importance of the military middle cadre. Centurions, equestrian tribunes, and other middle cadre officers who served in his new army were appointed *protectores*, as Michel Christol demonstrated long ago on the basis of plentiful epigraphical evidence.³² Some of them were, or were to be, important men. The earliest attested example is Lucius Petronius Taurus Volusianus, apparently an ally, friend or even relative of Gallienus who probably came from the same region, central Italy. He made a long military career, and ultimately became praetorian prefect (259), *consul ordinarius* together with the emperor (261), and *praefectus urbi* (267–268). Before he had been *centurio deputatus* (Rome), *primus pilus legionis XXX Ulpiae, praepositus equitum singulariorum, tribunus legionis* of three legions (X, XIII, and XIV Gemina in Dacia and Pannonia Superior), *tribunus cohortis III vigilum, tribunus cohortis XI urbanorum, tribunus cohortis* of the fourth and first praetorian cohorts, and prefect of the *vigiles* with the rank of *vir perfectissimus*.³³ It was probably during his office as tribune of a praetorian cohort that Volusianus received the title *protector*. Other equally important *protectores* were Aelius Aelianus, Aurelius Victor, Traianus Mucianus, Vitalianus, and Valerius Marcellinus.³⁴ How important the title *protector* was during Gallienus' sole reign is demonstrated by a text describing Traianus Mucianus' career, IGBulg III 2, 1570, from Stara Zagora, Thracia, in which the title *protector* is mentioned four times, in connection with four different military functions.³⁵ This new rank of *protector* was to enhance the status of the military middle and higher cadre of Gallienus' new army, and to have them commit themselves to the emperor. The title suggests that they had a special task in protecting and supporting the emperor's rule, the protectorate being not a formal rank but rather the expression of a personal relationship. Gallienus opened new career chances to *protectores* and other middle cadre people. They were, more so than in the past, appointed legionary commanders and provincial governors.³⁶ These career officers were not senators, but *equites*. *Protectores* received important privileges. Fergus Millar quotes *CJ* 10.48.2, where the emperor Diocletian, probably repeating an older decision, says to an embassy from Antioch that to the holders of certain ranks he and his co-emperors had granted an

exception from city and personal obligations, that is to those who had been *protectores* or *praepositi*.³⁷ The most important and experienced among those equestrian career officers, some of whom may already have been promoted by Valerian, started to form a kind of military staff, the *état-major* of the emperor's new mobile army.³⁸ After 268, some members of this staff, Claudius and Aurelian, became emperors. This staff was not always loyal to Gallienus. And in 268 they murdered him to install one of themselves, Claudius, in his place.³⁹

An important issue in managing the military was good, effective leadership at the top. The emperors, the military leaders 'par excellence,' had to be successful in defeating the enemies, caring for the soldiers, and maintaining the power and glory of the empire. When border conflicts became really serious wars, the emperors had to go and fight the enemies themselves. Their presence may have given the soldiers the idea that necessary supplies would duly arrive. In some cases prolonged absence of emperors from threatened areas or frustrated expectations about the effects of imperial presence resulted in usurpations, as happened in 235, when the soldiers were disappointed about Severus Alexander, and in 260, after Valerian had been taken prisoner by the Persians and Gallienus had been pinned down in Italy.⁴⁰

In imperial representation military victories and a permanent potential for victory were quintessential elements, not only in the third century, but right from the start of the Principate, and even earlier, as has been convincingly argued by Carlos Noreña and other writers.⁴¹ This created patterns of expectation whenever emperors took to the field of war themselves. The emperors had to win, or else they would lose face and credibility, and see their leadership descend from a higher, transforming type of leadership to a lower, transactional one. In other words, they would become more dependent on the wishes and whims of their soldiers and officers. In 272 the emperor Aurelian managed to keep his soldiers from plundering Tyana, apparently through persuasion,⁴² but Elagabalus' advisors and tutors could only hold back their own soldiers from ransacking Antioch in 218 at the cost of an extra bonus of 2,000 sesterces each. The amount of money needed to carry this promise into practice was in part collected from the people of Antioch by the emperor's assistants.⁴³ Aurelian's authority among the military was strong, whereas Elagabalus' generals had to negotiate and buy the consent of the military. In 260 the Rhine army went over to Postumus when Silvanus (and officially Saloninus, the junior emperor) commanded them to give back the booty they had taken from retreating enemies who wanted to get over the Rhine. But even Postumus, for all his strenuous campaigning against the Germans, did not have a position strong enough to go against corporate interests of his forces. When he, having successfully besieged the usurper Laelianus at Mogontiacum (Mainz) in 268 or 269, forbade his soldiers to plunder this town, he was killed by his own men.⁴⁴ Perhaps he did not have the money to buy them off, as Elagabalus' advisors had done at Antioch. According to Zosimus (1.65.1f.), the emperor Probus, a strenuous and militarily experienced emperor, at the start of his rule had the slayers of his predecessors Aurelian and Tacitus killed through a deceitful ambush, not through public trials, because he was afraid of repercussions among

soldiers and bureaucrats. His régime was still too new and weak. This may be a mythical story, but it indicates that Zosimus or his sources were aware of weaknesses in the position of a new emperor.

Imperial leadership could progress from a transactional to a transforming one, which developed strong dynastic claims of its own. This was important, for Roman emperorship was a dynastic system of rule, in a society that paid particular attention to kinship.⁴⁵ When Septimius Severus was about to stage his coup, in 193, he had to negotiate with his military cadre and with colleagues who were governing nearby provinces, but after initial successes in Italy, against Didius Iulianus, his authority was strong enough to disarm and sack the praetorian guard and replace it by his own men.⁴⁶ In 193 it was prudent for him to associate himself with Pertinax, wisely avoiding links with Commodus, which could jeopardize senatorial and military support.⁴⁷ In 197 he still had to buy military loyalty, doubling the soldiers' pay, to prevent usurpations, but he was already strong enough to claim dynastic continuity, pretending that Commodus had been his brother and renaming his elder son (Caracalla) Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.⁴⁸ People who had hated Commodus apparently could do him no harm any more. In the end, Severan dynastic claims had become very strong, and even enabled Maesa and Mamaea to put their offspring on the throne. Later third-century dynasties did not manage to do this and to survive their first and second generations. Valerian and Gallienus had a chance, but in their period the Roman empire went through a terrible crisis, and Valerian suffered one of the worst defeats in Roman history. That Gallienus survived is a miracle. Right after the crisis of 259–261 he was already strong enough, however, to crush a band of mutinous soldiers at Byzantium in a treacherous way.⁴⁹ The soldiers of his new army must have liked him. They were not happy when their emperor had been murdered. According to the author of the *Historia Augusta* they called him an *imperator utilis, necessarius, fortis*, and *efficax* (an emperor who had been useful, indispensable, courageous, and effective, HA *Gallienus* 15.1).⁵⁰ This story comes from the *Historia Augusta*, but in the Gallienus biography the author of this problematic literary source seems to rely on fairly good material, for example the works of Dexippus whom he explicitly cites elsewhere in this *vita*.⁵¹ Moreover Gallienus is one of his scapegoats, which cannot have made it easy for him to mention anything good about this emperor, unless he could not avoid it.

In some cases initially good imperial leadership deteriorated, either through defeat or lack of military success, or because an emperor or usurper started to take things easy after initial success. Pescennius Niger was an experienced leader, but after preliminary success and because he had been acclaimed at the games in Rome⁵² he was letting his imagination run away with him by getting excited over empty, uncertain hopes, while Septimius Severus, his main opponent, was an efficient, vigorous administrator, quick to make decisions, acting upon his decisions promptly.⁵³ In 217 Macrinus got rid of Caracalla in a clever way, and managed – though being an *eques* – to get accepted by his army and the senate, but then forfeited the war against the Parthians, lingered on in

Syria without making any firm decisions, and became niggardly towards the soldiers, one reason for this risky course being that he had had to bribe himself out of the Parthian war, which may have cost him 200 million sesterces.⁵⁴ In this way he lost authority over his soldiers who now felt free to think of another emperor. Although his leadership had become weak, he did not buy his soldiers' loyalty. Surprisingly his military cadre stood by him almost to the end.⁵⁵

In 251, after Decius' demise, Trebonianus Gallus efficiently solved the crisis that had come up in the Balkans. Buying off the Goths and assembling remnants of the Roman armies he managed to prevent utter disaster, and to get accepted as emperor by the present soldiery. But having returned to Rome he seems to have become sluggish. He unwisely insulted the Persian king, thus entering upon a new round of Persian wars, and lost the confidence of his army, which went over to Aemilianus, who had profited by the rising uncertainty about Gallus' leadership and had usurped imperial power after some successes against marauding Goths and other barbarians.⁵⁶

When imperial authority and leadership broke down or armies lost trust in a ruling emperor's capacities either to win the war or to organize sufficient supplies or both, the result more often than not was a usurpation of imperial power by some general who was backed by his soldiers. As was demonstrated above, in chapter 2, armed forces started to rebel or usurp imperial power when they came into logistical difficulties, when they were losing hope of gaining a victory or saving their lives, or when the emperor behaved in such a strange way that they could no longer take him seriously as their highest commander. Some third-century usurpations were actually military actions, one army or a group of military or a popular military leader taking priority in getting supplies or military reserves. This type of usurpation had first and foremost to do with a lack of means, resulting in starvation and disease, and a lack of men, particularly in times of impending enemy attack. A lack of men could have been caused by heavy casualties during preceding campaigns, hunger, epidemics, extra mortality due to long travels or marches,⁵⁷ and by emperors taking away detachments from military bases situated at the frontiers.⁵⁸

Usurpations of imperial power might be caused or stimulated by chaotic situations following defeat and military misfortune. After Decius' defeat and demise, in 251, Trebonianus Gallus assembled the remnants of the Roman army in the Balkans, got their support, and usurped imperial power.⁵⁹ The Persian victory and invasion of the years 252–253 caused an Emesene prince or priest named Uranius Antoninus to gather local forces and remaining Roman soldiers, with which he successfully repulsed Persian raiders. He subsequently usurped the purple but disappeared before the emperor Valerian reached Syria, in 254.⁶⁰ In 260, after the capture of the emperor Valerian, a commander called Ballista assembled *reliquiae* (remnants) of the Roman army and fleet without waiting for orders coming from the remaining emperor Gallienus or other authorities. Ballista got the chance to do this because the Persians had spread out to plunder. Ballista subsequently successfully attacked plundering groups of enemies. A rather

mythical story has it that he even took Shapur's harim.⁶¹ In chapter 466 Syncellus tells us:

At that time, the Persians, through their greed, were scattered in different places, and as they were on the verge of Pompeiopolis Maritima, and were plundering Lykaonia, they were destroyed in very large numbers, when Ballista, the Roman general whom the Romans had made their leader while in flight, launched an unexpected naval attack against them with his forces.

Ballista allied himself to the usurper Macrianus who was defending Samosata, which had probably been a logistical base of Valerian's army and was still containing important supplies.⁶²

Emperors commanded not only regular armies but also had to deal with irregular forces and armies mobilized by client-kings and vassal princes. From 238 onwards emergency levies acted wherever civil strife, invasions, and defeats had caused chaos and uncertainty. Many of those consisted of regional levies added to Roman troops. In 194 Pescennius Niger added recruits that had been quickly raised in Asia Minor to his own army, to fight Severus. One of his lieutenants, Aemilianus, commanded a combined force of his own locally levied troops and the soldiers dispatched by Niger.⁶³ In 238 there was a tragic clash between soldiers of Maximinus' praetorian guard and the Roman populace guided by a few senators and assisted by a band of gladiators.⁶⁴ The praetorians won, but the incident induced the senate to raise and arm *iuventutes* all over Italy, which had to help the army of the pretender Maximus to fight the emperor Maximinus. In 259 two Germanic bands entered Italy. One column could only be stopped – in the neighborhood of Ravenna – by an Italian/urban militia and some remaining troops.⁶⁵ Another column was defeated by a similar mixed army in Etruria.⁶⁶ Italy did not have a governor who was responsible for its defense, and so the senate and other accidentally present magistrates had to find makeshift solutions when enemy warrior groups managed to get into Italy, the emperor was not present, and most of Italy's 'garrison' was abroad.⁶⁷ In April 260 in Raetia one of two raiding columns that had invaded Italy, a band of Luthungi who belonged to the Elbgermanic tribe of the Semnones, was successfully attacked by the *vir perfectissimus agens vice praesidis* Marcus Simplicius Genialis. The Luthungi probably tried to return home with their booty and prisoners after having pillaged parts of Italy. On an altar erected to Victory at Augsburg in September 260 (AE 1993, 1231b) we read that these *Semnones sive Luthungi* were defeated by soldiers from Raetia combined with detachments seconded from the legions of the province of Germania (Superior?) and a provincial militia. Genialis freed thousands of Italians who had been deported from their homeland.⁶⁸

In the same fateful year the Palmyrene prince Odaenathus collected remnants of Roman forces, combining them with Syrian recruits and his own cavalry. His mixed army was very successful against the Persians but he remained loyal to the ruling emperor Gallienus.⁶⁹ Other vassal princes or client-kings were the Abgarid prince of Osroene (239–242), the Frankish chieftain installed in northwest Germania

Inferior by Gallienus, the Marcoman Attalus (about 260), and Naulobatus (267–268), one of the leaders of the band of Heruli that was defeated by Gallienus.⁷⁰ Not much is known of their activities but at least they did not become usurpers. Instead, they reinforced the military strength of the emperor.

In 262 Greek emergency levies, together with a Roman commander called Marianus, tried in vain to stop invading enemies at Thermopylae.⁷¹ When the Palmyrenes invaded Egypt in 270, the prefect Tenagino Probus had to rely on a local levy, which in one of our sources is even called the Egyptians or the Egyptian army.⁷² Most irregular forces, by the way, added to the strength of the imperial defense and did not support usurpers.

Was there a kind of regionalization of the Roman armies, an increasing regional particularism among soldiers and officers?⁷³ In other words, was the Roman imperial army gradually falling apart into competing regional forces? There is a slight indication in Herodian 6.7.2–3, where the author relates that in 234 Severus Alexander – who was still in the east after his Persian war – received messages from the governors in the Danube region about Germans invading and devastating Roman territories. In their messages they added that the presence of the emperor and his entire army was needed. Those messages, Herodian continues, caused distress to the soldiers transferred from Illyricum, who were in great anxiety about their families back home, and turned their anger on Severus Alexander, blaming him for his hesitant procrastination over the northern problems.⁷⁴ Maybe their regional interests were already becoming stronger than their loyalty to the emperor. Or were they just angry about the emperor's obvious lack of energy and ability? In my view the military forces were not falling apart nor regionalizing. Many soldiers were serving in *vexillationes* that had almost become permanent units, in mobile armies, many of them had consequently come to know military personnel from many different regions in the empire, and quite a few of them had had to march to battlefields in more than one region, where they met yet other units. Career inscriptions testify to the fact that middle cadre officers traveled from east to west, north to south, and back, to fulfill their tasks at the stations they had been appointed to. So they knew from their own experience many corners of the empire, and consequently also the troops that were encamped or were in action there.⁷⁵ These phenomena laid a sound foundation of unity. The unity and homogeneity of the legionary nucleus of the Roman armed forces was also visible to anyone. As Pierre Cosme makes clear, the clothes of legionary soldiers may have differed already from one area of the empire to the other, but their military equipment was still uniform. Jon Coulston argues that the differences in terms of equipment, which served to distinguish legionary soldiers from auxiliaries, disappeared in the third century, which made the armed forces still more homogeneous to look at.⁷⁶

In conclusion. In the period 193–284 the military forces cost the empire a lot and gave many emperors much trouble; but in the end they maintained the empire. They remained the first and most important source of imperial power. It is open to doubt whether they were much influenced by imperial images and representation – though maybe by the ubiquitous imperial victory propaganda, as long as it tallied with actual successes.

4.3. Networks and administrative personnel

To administer the empire emperors traditionally relied on networks composed of members of the higher orders (senators, knights, and local élites), and a personal bureaucracy consisting of imperial slaves and freedmen, free equestrian bureaucrats, and military personnel seconded from the armed forces. The emperors were mainly advised by a small group of trusted, important men who had occupied top functions in the provinces, Rome, and the entourage of the emperors.⁷⁷ Together with the emperors themselves they were the most important career brokers. This system began to change under the Severans and their successors until 249, and was transformed more thoroughly under the impact of war and crisis during the decades that followed. More than ever before under the Principate emperors needed helpers and administrators who were experienced in waging war, tracking down looting enemies, managing military personnel, and raising taxes, supplies, and services even from worn-out populations. As always in pre-industrial times, intensified war efforts could only be maintained by increased taxation and requisition, which was the more true because mining and exploiting imperial domains could not fill the gap, as we have seen in the preceding chapter. In this chapter we will try to analyze how the inevitable changes in appointment policies influenced the political and military power of the emperors.

Changing appointment policies

Under the High Principate, top-level administrators, commanders, and advisors in the emperors' entourage had been senators, militarily or juridically skilled *equites*, intellectuals, mostly of equestrian status, and some freedmen in the emperor's service.⁷⁸ At the imperial court members of imperial dynasties were important as well. In the third century important changes occurred. Senators, jurists, and other intellectuals, either *equites* or not, lost much influence at court and many important positions in imperial administration, and instead military men and bureaucrats came to the fore.

Within the senatorial order there was continuity and discontinuity. Under the two early Severan emperors killing senators and confiscating their possessions seems to have become a habit. Septimius Severus confiscated properties of supporters of his competitors to such an extent that he needed specially appointed procurators, *procuratores ad bona damnatorum*, to administer them,⁷⁹ and having eliminated his brother and competitor Geta, Caracalla likewise had senators killed.⁸⁰ Other men, to a large extent equestrian supporters of the new dynasty, were selected in their place. The 'Severan' senate that thus came into existence may have been characterized by a relatively strong continuity, as Inge Mennen demonstrates.⁸¹ Until 235 there were no more waves of terror of early Severan magnitude, and it is by no means certain that Elagabalus and Maximinus Thrax found the time to organize such a thing. They are accused of killing senators, but names of victims are hardly known. Maximinus spent all of his regnal years in Germany and at the northern frontiers, fighting enemy bands of warriors.

Senators in Rome may have been afraid, however, that Maximinus was planning a wave of anti-senatorial terror, which may have been one of the reasons that the senate so readily took sides with the Gordiani in 238, a very risky thing to do. There is no reliable evidence that successive emperors after 238 persecuted senators. There is just one slight indication that Aurelian may have done so. In 30.8.8 Ammianus Marcellinus tells us that he fell upon the rich like a torrent, and several sources mention him killing senators along with mutinous *monetarii*, supposedly their comrades in conspiracy and corruption.⁸²

Inge Mennen researched the histories of senatorial families in the third century, and established that there were 18 families, which after Septimius Severus and Caracalla kept providing senators in one generation after the other. Her detailed prosopographical analysis has revealed similarities in the profiles of these families which collectively constituted a nucleus within the central senatorial elite. These families seem to have maintained or even improved their positions during the period of crisis. All families in this senatorial inner circle were strongly attached to Italy, and a considerable proportion of them possessed or reached patrician status at some point in the third century.⁸³ First of all there are the Caesonii, who are well-documented,⁸⁴ but also the Anicii, Bruttii, Catii, Claudii Pompeiani, Egnatii, Fulvii Aemiliani, Hedii, Marii, Nummii, Pollieni, Pomponii, Postumii, Valerii, Vettii, Virii, and two less well-documented families, the Acilii and Claudii Severi.⁸⁵ The Mummii might be added; one of them was *consul ordinarius* in 262.⁸⁶ Nineteen is not an impressive number, but it gives us an indication, which tallies with the argument that persecutions of senators became rarer after the early Severan age. So it is not strange to assume that the nucleus of the 'Severan' senate had a reasonable continuity.

Around this fairly continuous nucleus there were more volatile circles. The Severan emperors and their successors up to Gallienus seem to have continued the habit to transfer able, experienced knights to the senatorial order, to safeguard the availability of sufficient numbers of senators who could be sent to difficult top-level posts in the empire. A good example is the career of one of Septimius Severus' best generals, Ti. Claudius Candidus, probably a fellow African from Cirta in Numidia. He was in action during the war against Niger, and participated in Severus' expeditions following Niger's defeat. Having started his career in equestrian functions, he had been admitted to the senate by Commodus *inter tribunicios* and *inter praetorios*. In 178–180, as a *praepositus copiarum*, a logistical function, he may have worked together with Marcus Aurelius Papius Dionysius, a juridically skilled bureaucrat who had been *consiliarius* of the emperor Marcus Aurelius.⁸⁷ Candidus became a *consul suffectus* about 195–196.⁸⁸ There are more examples. Judging from the senatorial posts he held from about 195 onwards, Ti. Claudius Claudianus must have pursued a militarily tinged equestrian career first. From 195, as a *praetorius*, he was legionary commander of the legions XIII Gemina and V Macedonica, *praepositus* of some detachments from Dacia, and commander of the legion II Adiutrix, (simultaneously being governor of the one-legion province of Pannonia Inferior). About 202 or 206 he became governor of Pannonia Superior, an important military post.⁸⁹ Under Septimius Severus L.

Septimius Marianus was an officer who became procurator of the *summa ratio privata* with a high salary (300,000 sesterces), and subsequently was consul and governor of a province in northern Asia Minor.⁹⁰ Rutilius Pudens Crispinus had made a very short equestrian career when Caracalla admitted him to the senate. We know that he had been prefect of *cohors I Lusitanorum equitatae quingenariae*, in Pannonia or Moesia. As a senator he made a long and busy career, full of posts at the borders, but also in Italy and some *provinciae inermes*. He became an experienced man in all kinds of administration, but also in military and logistical tasks in war zones. In 238 he was elected *dux* on the senatorial side, to fight Maximinus at Aquileia.⁹¹ Other 'new men' who were promoted to the senatorial order had made more administratively or juridically tinged careers. Cn. Licinius Rufinus may have been a student of Paul, one of the jurists frequently cited in the *Digesta*. He started his career under Septimius Severus and seems to have been *consiliarius Augusti*, *ab epistulis Graecis*, and *a studiis*. Thereafter, he may have been a *rationibus* and a *libellis*, after which he was admitted to the senate. In the eventful year 238 he was one of the *vigintiviri*, the senatorial committee that opposed Maximinus Thrax.⁹² C. Julius Avitus Alexianus made a long career. As an *eques* he was prefect of a *cohors Ulpia Petraeorum*, military tribune (c. 202), prefect of an *ala* (c. 204), and *procurator ad annonam Augustorum LX* at Ostia. Having been promoted to the senatorial order at the rank of a former aedile he became *praetor*, *sodalis Titialis* (a priesthood), possibly commander of the *legio IV Flavia*, governor of the province of Raetia, *consul*, *comes* (companion) of Septimius Severus and Caracalla in Britain (209–211), *praefectus alimentorum*, *comes* of Caracalla in Germany (213) and Mesopotamia (216–217), *praefectus alimentorum II* (217?), governor of Dalmatia, and *proconsul* of either Asia or Africa, the summit of a senatorial career.⁹³ Under Severus Alexander Lucius Didius Marinus became a senator (*vir clarissimus*), after a long equestrian career. He had supervised the gladiators in the provinces of Asia Minor and Cyprus, and in the Gauls, Britain, Spain, the Germaniae, and Raetia, had been *procurator alimentorum* in northern Italy and Istria, had been active in the raising of taxes (*vectigalia*) in the southern half of the Po valley, had been the emperor's procurator in the provinces of Galatia and Arabia, in the province of Asturia and Gallaecia in the northwest of Spain, and in Asia, to become *vir perfectissimus a sacris cognitionibus* under Caracalla, in 215. According to Devijver, he may have been a praetorian prefect at the start of Severus Alexander's reign. In 223 he was one of the patrons mentioned in the album of Canusium.⁹⁴

So trusted knights whose skills and experience were in demand became senators and made a busy senatorial career, as it had always been under the Principate. But what about more one-sidedly military men, such as former *primi pili*? According to Brian Dobson, not many of them became senators. He mentions just one, Aelius Triccius who became governor of Pannonia Inferior under Macrinus, an ephemeral emperor who may have needed reliable men at important posts, even if their status was too low.⁹⁵ Other military men of those times who made spectacular careers to ultimately consular level were Marcus Oclatinus Adventus and Publius Valerius Comazon.⁹⁶ As praetorian prefects they received

the consular signs of honor, the *ornamenta consularia*, given to them by Caracalla and Elagabalus respectively. Comazon even received them twice. Receiving the *ornamenta consularia* was a great honor. Björn Schöpe convincingly argues that under the Severan emperors the *ornamenta consularia*, like the consulate itself, were important status markers to successful knights.⁹⁷ Severus Alexander discontinued this practice, however.⁹⁸ His appointment policies were more conservative.

An important change was the gradual superseding of senators in military and administrative functions by more experienced equestrians. Administrative substitution was one of the characteristics of the third century, probably because there was too much work and a great need for more specialized personnel.⁹⁹ After 260, under Gallienus, the process of superseding senators accelerated to a complete ousting of senators from officer's posts in the armies, and a shrinking of their possibilities to become provincial governors.¹⁰⁰ The development was gradual and started already under the Severan emperors. A sign of coming changes was that Septimius Severus appointed an equestrian *praefectus* to be his governor of the new province of Mesopotamia, not a senatorial *legatus* or *proconsul*. The new equestrian governor was assisted by two *praefecti legionis* who commanded the new legions I and III Parthica, which constituted the province's garrison.¹⁰¹ In this way a senator did not have to serve under a governor who was lower in social status. Furthermore, from the Severan era onwards, the number of cases in which senatorial governors were replaced by equestrian *agentes vice praesidis* increased. *Praeses* by then still was a largely informal title, such as 'governor.' This trend continued and even intensified from 240 onwards. These *agentes* were no longer stand-ins for deceased or departed senatorial governors. From the reign of Severus Alexander onwards some areas, such as Dacia, a typical war zone, were so frequently governed by equestrian *agentes vice praesidis* that it is unlikely that all those men were appointed only as interim governors.¹⁰² Inge Mennen shows that the career of Timesitheus, praetorian prefect and father-in-law of the emperor Gordian III, is illustrative of this development. Under Elagabalus, Timesitheus was *procurator* in Arabia, serving as *agens vice praesidis* twice. Under Severus Alexander he was *agens vice praesidis* of the province of Germania Inferior, while simultaneously holding a position as *agens vice procuratoris* of the imperial properties in Gallia Belgica and the two Germaniae. This combination of functions enabled Timesitheus both to collect resources from imperial domains and send them to the troops he commanded at this section of the *limes*. The combination returned soon in Asia Minor, where Timesitheus became *procurator* of the imperial properties and simultaneously *agens vice praesidis* in Bithynia-Pontus, including Paphlagonia, and finally *procurator* and *vice proconsulis* in the province of Asia under Maximinus Thrax.¹⁰³

During the sole reign of Gallienus the process of replacing senatorial governors by equestrian near-professionals was intensified.¹⁰⁴ Some people still think that this emperor published an edict to this effect, but there is no evidence to prove this.¹⁰⁵ The available evidence just reveals that there were more *agentes vice praesidis* and fewer 'normal' senatorial governors, and that from the start of

Gallienus' sole reign there were no longer any senatorial *tribuni laticlavii* and legionary commanders in extant career inscriptions. The last *tribunus laticlavius* we know of was Publius Balsamius Sabinianus, about 260.¹⁰⁶ Beyond that year military tribunes and legionary commanders who are attested in epigraphical texts are all *equites*. This change in appointment policies coincided with the military reforms that were discussed in chapter 2, *i.e.* with the creation of a new, mobile army, and with an actual reduction of the size of standard legionary border units of the Roman army. *Vexillationes* rarely returned to their 'mother legions' and some of them may have become almost as big as the depleted legions of the 260s.

From Gallienus' sole reign onwards some provinces, such as Arabia, Macedonia, and Numidia, were almost continuously governed by equestrian men who were still called *agentes vice praesidis*. The emperors who succeeded Gallienus did not reverse this development. They enlarged the proportion of provinces ruled by equestrian functionaries.¹⁰⁷ Beyond 260 the procuratorial system gradually disappeared. From now on governors of minor provinces were *praesides* who combined the judicial tasks of former governors with the duties of former procurators. Long ago Bengt Malcus demonstrated that Gallienus and his successors tended to place the administrative and fiscal duties in more and more provinces in the hands of a single man, the new equestrian *praeses*. Hence arose a trend towards the fusion of the fiscal and administrative careers which had previously been radically separated – those of governors and procurators.¹⁰⁸

Military men, called *duces*, *praefecti*, *praepositi*, or *correctores* commanded the armed forces at different levels of command, although in my view provincial governors were not yet formally excluded from doing this. 'Dividing political from military powers' was not yet systematically done. For strategic, tactical or logistical reasons *duces* could be appointed to 'great commands' over territories situated in more than one province.¹⁰⁹ How risky this policy was, was made clear by a series of usurpations of imperial power by important *duces*, mostly high equestrians, who were fearing impending attacks and/or felt themselves neglected or left alone by reigning emperors. Pacatianus usurped imperial power in 248, Decius (a senator) did so one year later, Aemilianus in 253, Ingenuus in 258 or 260, and Regalianus in 260.¹¹⁰ Such great commands, over wide tracts of border land and over more than one province, also existed in other parts of the empire, not only at the Danube frontier. Under Valerian, Marcus Cornelius Octavianus became *dux* over a wide territory in North Africa (somewhere between 253 and 258).¹¹¹ The same emperor appointed Postumus in Gaul, at the Rhine frontier.¹¹² Gallienus' general Aureolus became *praepositus* of a defensive district opposite Postumus and the Alamans, a *praetentura Alpium*, his headquarters being Milan.¹¹³ Under Valerian a much smaller *praetentura* had existed at the Middle Euphrates (AD 252–256). The petitions P. Euphr. 3 and 4 are addressed to the *praepositus praetenturae* there.¹¹⁴ Another Gallienic commander, Marcianus, was appointed *dux* in the Balkans to fight the invaders, when Gallienus himself had to leave the region because of Aureolus' usurpation of imperial power or desertion to Postumus (AD 267 or 268).¹¹⁵ And we could add the Palmyrene prince Odaenathus who was not only a client king but was also called

consularis, *dux Romanorum*, and *corrector Orientis*. He had to restore Roman positions at the eastern frontiers after Valerian's capture, and did so successfully.¹¹⁶ Other *duces* and *praepositi* were of a lower status, and just commanded some irregular forces, or parts or remnants of a legion, or detachments which had *ad hoc* been grouped together, or a military frontier district. Their existence testifies to the military turmoil of the third quarter of the third century.

The continual internal and external wars and threats of war, especially during the period of crisis but even before, also enhanced the position of *equites* in offices that supervised military logistics.¹¹⁷ One of them was the *a rationibus* in Rome, who, after an emperor had decided to wage a war, handled the finances for the forthcoming campaign. A remarkable series of men with full military and civilian equestrian careers held this office, and several of them even ascended from below the equestrian order, from the rank of senior centurions.¹¹⁸ Other high equestrians who had to do with military logistics would have been the *praefecti vehiculorum*, supervisors of the imperial posting system and in charge of provincial roads.¹¹⁹ Other responsibilities in military logistics went to the *ab epistulis* who sent out demands for supplies and recommended qualified officers, such as the *praepositi annonae expeditionis*.¹²⁰ *Primi pili* had responsibilities in military logistics too. The *praefectus annonae* did not; he was responsible for the corn supply of the city of Rome, not for the *annona militaris*.¹²¹

From the start of Gallienus' sole reign legions came to be commanded by equestrian prefects. The title *legatus legionis* disappeared and was replaced by the title *praefectus legionis* who from now on was a legionary commander, not just a prefect of the camp (*praefectus castrorum*).¹²² Many of them must have commanded fairly depleted legions, which had lost many men and had been obliged to yield *vexillationes* to campaigning armies. The status of the legionary prefects was comparable to that of the equestrian *praepositi* of *vexillationes*, many of which never returned to their 'mother legions.' Such *vexillationes* and their 'mother legions' began to resemble future Diocletianic legions, which were much smaller than their second century AD predecessors had been.

Most *praepositi* of *vexillationes* were career soldiers, for example former centurions. During the civil wars of 193–194 Lucius Valerius Valerianus was *praepositus vexillationum*, after having done three officer posts (*tres militiae*), and after having served as a cavalry commander and procurator in Cyprus, and before becoming *praepositus cohortium peregrinarum* (of cohorts from the camp of the *frumentarii* in Rome) and *praepositus summae rationis privatae Mesopotamena*, a position of trust in a new province, at the office of the imperial domains.¹²³ In 198 Flavius Super was *praepositus* of infantry detachments (*inter alia* of the legions III Augusta and III Gallica) and a cavalry unit, the *ala equitum Pannoniorum*.¹²⁴ Valerius Claudius Quintus from Virunum was *dux et praepositus* of a detachment of the third legion Augusta from Numidia, after having been *primus pilus* with the second legion Italica (Upper Danube border).¹²⁵ Under Severus Alexander Titus Licinius Hierocles was *praepositus equitum itemque peditum iuniorum Maurorum iure gladii*.¹²⁶ So he was an officer of Moorish cavalry detachments who had received administrative rights at governors' level. About

235 Valerius Statilius Castus was *praepositus vexillationum* in Pisidia, probably fighting bandits.¹²⁷ In 238, during the campaign of Aquileia against Maximinus Thrax, Flavius Servilianus was *praepositus in protensione [sic] Aquileiae*. A colleague, called Flavius Adiutor, had the same title.¹²⁸ Before entering upon a procuratorial career Publius Aelius Ammonius was, under Severus Alexander and Gordian III, *praefectus cohortis V Hispanorum* (Moesia Superior), *tribunus cohortis I Germanorum milliariae* (Cappadocia), *praepositus vexillationis in procinctu Armeniaco militum provinciae Cappadociae* (in Armenia, of soldiers recruited in Cappadocia in Asia Minor), *praefectus alae I Flavia Gaetulorum* (Pannonia Inferior), *praepositus* of detachments in Pannonia Inferior, and *praefectus classis Flaviae Moesiacaе Gordianae*.¹²⁹ An Ignotus was *dux legionum Daciae*, probably under Philip the Arab; he may have commanded remnants of legions which had experienced a hard time during that emperor's Carpic war. The man had before been *cornicularius* (an administrative function in a military unit) of a praetorian prefect and centurion, and subsequently made a successful military/administrative equestrian career.¹³⁰ Lucius Artorius Castus was *dux* of detachments from two legions from Britain. Before he had been centurion in four legions, in the east and at the Danube frontier, *primus pilus* with the *legio V Macedonica* (Lower Danube border), *praepositus* of a detachment of the Misenate fleet, and *praefectus legionis* of the sixth legion *Victrix* in Britain.¹³¹ Quintus Gargilius Martialis was *praepositus* of two cavalry units together, one of *equites singulares* (originally imperial bodyguards), and one of Mauri, North Africans. The latter were important in Gallienus' new army.¹³² Traianus Mucianus presumably started his career as a soldier in Gallienus' new field army, fought against the Goths in 267, was a cavalryman in the praetorian guard, and became *primus pilus* too. He was one of Gallienus' *protectores*. He was appointed *dux* or *praepositus* of *vexillationes* of the legions IV Flavia and VII Claudia (Danube border).¹³³ During Gallienus' sole reign a Vitalianus was *dux* of detachments taken from legions in Britain and the Germaniae.¹³⁴ Under the same emperor an Aurelius Augustianus was *dux* of detachments taken from the legions II Parthica (normally camping near Rome, but often also at Apamea in Syria, during imperial campaigns in the east) and III Augusta (Numidia), and an Ignotus mentioned in the same text was *praepositus vexillationum*.¹³⁵ Flavius Vibianus was *praepositus numeri Maurorum Aurelianorum Valeriani Gallieni*.¹³⁶ In the inscription AE 1936, 57 (AE 1960, 351, Poetovio, Pannonis Superior) mention is made of *leg(ionum) V] M(acedonicae) et XII [I G(eminae)]/[G]allienarum/[Fl]avius Aper v(ir) e(gregius)/[pra]epositus*. A *vir egregius*. Not a low rank. A Vibius Seneca was *dux* of *vexillationes* taken from both the imperial fleets, those of Misenum and Ravenna.¹³⁷

In the third century the title *praepositus vexillationis* or *vexillationum* became as common as those detachments themselves. The title existed before, but the evidence mostly comes from the third century.¹³⁸ In this way centurions and other officers saw their possibilities of making a military career expand.¹³⁹ A consequence was that there was a growing stock of experienced equestrian officers who had served at a relatively high level of responsibility, which made it easier for emperors to select these experienced men for any military or logistical

task they saw fit, legionary commands included. But again, such legionary commands became almost similar to positions of *praepositi* of *vexillationes*, and consequently less attractive to high-status senators. This must have contributed to the acceptance of Gallienus' appointment policy among contemporary senators. A fourth-century senator, Aurelius Victor, criticized them for it. In *Caesares* 37.5–7 he implies that his third-century predecessors preferred to enjoy their enormous wealth and to indulge in *otium* rather than endure the toils of military life, thus giving military men every possibility to dominate them. However, senators of the later third century may just have accepted Gallienus' measures because of status considerations.

As to provincial governors, the Gallienic change was not executed systematically; senatorial governors were not superseded everywhere. After 260, senators were particularly sent to consular senatorial provinces that were not as heavily struck by inroads and devastations as some border provinces were, such as Asia (or the parts in which it became divided), Africa Proconsularis, and Hispania Tarraconensis.¹⁴⁰ In this way the administration of the empire came to be executed according to two systems, the old provincial administration next to the new one.

One cause of the change in appointment policies that came about after 260 may be that Rome-based senators after 230 no longer had many opportunities to meet emperors personally. Most emperors were only seldom in Rome. People who assisted them in their campaigns, largely military *equites*, now dominated the imperial entourage. This was important. Appointment policies were to a large extent guided by persons the emperors regularly met.¹⁴¹ During his Persian expedition, Gordian III leant heavily on his father-in-law Timesitheus, and subsequently on the brothers Iulius Philippus and Priscus. His successor, the same Philip, did not yet have extended personal networks to rely on and so appointed members of his family, Priscus and Severianus, to the most important military sectors in the east and at the Lower Danube borders.¹⁴² The entourage of Septimius Severus, during his military campaigns, had largely consisted of trusted and experienced senators, such as Claudius Candidus, Cornelius Anullinus, Fabius Cilo, Hedius Rufus Lollianus Gentianus, Marius Maximus, Iulius Avitus Alexianus, Septimius Geta, and Virius Lupus¹⁴³ but Gallienus' staff comprised experienced equestrians, such as Aureolus, Volusianus, Marcianus, Heraclianus, Claudius (the future emperor), and Aurelian (another future emperor).¹⁴⁴ Compared to an emperor such as Gallienus the Antonines and the Severan emperors still had more mixed *consilia*, comprising senators, high equestrian officials, jurists, and military specialists.¹⁴⁵

Another reason for Gallienus' changing appointment policies may have been a senatorial lack of military, logistical, and practical administrative skills. Indeed there are indications that the careers of *equites* who were appointed instead of senators, the *agentes vices legati* (substitute legionary commanders) and *agentes vices praesidis* (substitute provincial governors) already way before Gallienus' sole reign produced more opportunities to obtain the necessary skills. After three officer posts (*tres militiae*) Ulpius Victor pursued an equestrian career which gave him ample fiscal and administrative experience, and brought him to the difficult Dacian provinces, right on the doorstep of Germanic raiders.¹⁴⁶ After a military career which

made him *primus pilus bis*, and after his equestrian *tres militiae*, T. Licinius Hierocles under Severus Alexander held three equestrian officer posts, among others as *praepositus equitum itemque peditum iuniorum Maurorum iure gladii* (sic!), became prefect of the *legio II Parthica vice legati*, did administrative procuratorial work, and was also *praeses* of Sardinia and Mauretania Caesariensis,¹⁴⁷ a career that gave him ample opportunities to become an experienced military man and administrator. L. Titinius Clodianus after four officer posts pursued a procuratorial career, during which he was *praeses et procurator* in Epirus and the Maritime Alps. His career gave him fiscal experience, among others in Asia and Bithynia, and brought him to the difficult border province of Moesia Inferior. Subsequently he became *procurator centenarius patrimoni partes praesidis agens provinciae Numidiae*, in a logistically clever combination of patrimonial and administrative duties, just as Timesitheus had fulfilled in Germania Inferior and Bithynia/Paphlagonia.¹⁴⁸ In 247, under Philip, he ultimately became *procurator ducenarius* of the grand gladiatorial school in Rome, the *ludus magnus*, an important post in light of the millennial celebrations.¹⁴⁹

The replacement of senatorial legionary commanders by equestrian legionary prefects may have been unavoidable, in third-century circumstances, but one could have second thoughts about the military necessity of appointing equestrian governors and *duces*. The imperial administration could have continued the policies of Marcus Aurelius and the Severan emperors through promoting experienced knights to the senatorial order. Besides, not all senators were incompetent commanders. Under the Severans and their successors until about 260 there were not only good equestrian military specialists, but also competent commanders with senatorial family backgrounds who had not been promoted from the equestrian order. They followed traditional, mixed, civil, and military, senatorial careers and were successful in each sphere of activity. Furthermore, before 260 there had been 'military senators' indeed. Under the Severan emperors, a kind of dichotomy in senatorial careers had come into existence. Senators could make either militarily focused careers or more civilian ones.¹⁵⁰ A good example of the former of the two is the career followed by Marius Maximus. In between traditional senatorial functions and *honores* he was *tribunus militum laticlavus* (twice), legate of the *legio I Italica* at the Danube, commander of troops from Moesia during the siege of Byzantium (193–196) and in the battle of Lugdunum against Albinus (197). He was a busy administrator. He governed five provinces: Gallia Belgica, Germania Inferior, Syria Coele, Africa, and Asia for two years, all very exceptional. His career demonstrates that he was a staunch ally of the Severan dynasty.¹⁵¹ According to Herodian 7.10.4, another Maximus (Pupienus), one of the emperors of 238, had held many military commands and the prefecture of the city. He was a senator from Italy – born about 164, possibly at Volaterrae in Tuscany – who had worked his way up to the top of the senatorial career under the Severi. He may be seen as a senatorial *vir militaris*. He was *consul suffectus* under Severus and Caracalla, just before 210 governor of one of the Germaniae, *proconsul Asiae* (before 234), *consul iterum ordinarius* in 234, and prefect of the city of Rome from 234 to 237.¹⁵² The emperor Decius may have been such a

senator too. According to Anthony Birley, he had made a very active career, and he was well-known among the troops in 'Illyricum,' his power base in 249.¹⁵³

Perhaps Gallienus tried, through changes in his appointment policies, to enhance personal loyalty towards himself among his top-level officers and administrators. The *equites* who were appointed to senatorial positions may have been more dependent on imperial benevolence and patronage than would have been scions of traditional senatorial families and 'new' senators who in wealth and status were comparable to traditional senatorial families. Many members of the senatorial order, old and new, had been supported by their wealth, and were traditionally entitled to reaching the highest honors in due course, in 'their' years, whereas the new equestrian governors and legionary commanders simply had to wait for more appointments. What stronger dependence on the emperor's favors might mean may be made clear by a parallel from earlier Roman history. Iulius Caesar's staff in Gaul and during the Civil Wars that followed his Gallic campaign did not count as many young nobles as Pompey's entourage had done during his eastern wars and the Civil War against Caesar. This may have made Caesar's military cadre more loyal to their commander and more cohesive. They had a corporate interest, and could only survive and become rich and important if their commander would succeed. Pompey's nobles saw themselves as independent *potentes* who were entitled to having a top career in the state's service and whose loyalty applied as much to the common weal, the *res publica*, as to the person of their commander.¹⁵⁴ The creation of a more cohesive and loyal retinue of middle and higher cadre officers may have been in Gallienus' mind too. An indication is that he gave the cadres of his new army the title *protectores*,¹⁵⁵ which was a personal distinction connected with personal loyalty more than a formal title denoting a magistrature or a tangible function. *Protectores* had to protect their emperor against enemies and usurpers.

What did senators lose? Senators and their sons lost their traditional military functions; they could – after 260 – no longer be military tribunes or legionary commanders. Losing the military tribunate robbed them not only of a chance to obtain some military experience, but also of a good training ground in practical day-to-day administrative work. According to *Dig.* 49.16.12.2, military tribunes were present at military exercises, kept the keys of the gates of the camp, controlled the sentries who were on guard, checked the quality of the grain that the soldiers were to receive, were present at the distribution of this grain, punished offenses, were frequently present at sessions in the legion's headquarters, judged disputes between soldiers who had fallen out with one another, and inspected the camp-hospital. Besides senators would be getting fewer opportunities to govern provinces. They lost many provinces to militarily and administratively experienced knights, particularly in the embattled peripheries of the empire. The praetorian and consular careers of most senators became much shorter and began to resemble careers of patrician *praetorii* and *consulares*.

Senators gained something too, though. They could, more than before about 180, fulfill new high-status functions. According to Paul Leunissen, extant patrician careers of the years 180–235 were already becoming longer and more busy

than such careers had been during the decades before, from 138 to 180.¹⁵⁶ First of all, throughout the century, some status-high senators had to serve as the emperor's deputies for legal matters, *iudices vice Caesaris*. Two of the Caesonii, a relatively well-documented family, acted in this office, and so did Lucius Valerius Poplicola Balbinus Maximus.¹⁵⁷ During the third century senators more often than before had to act as *curatores rei publicae*, especially in Italy, which gave them the opportunity to strengthen their ties with local élites in this central region of the empire. *Curatores rei publicae* had to assist local governments to keep their communities' finances in order, and maintain or recover communal public properties. Apparently high senatorial, preferably patrician, status was needed to lend *curatores* authority to impress local élites in communities where they had to function.¹⁵⁸

Senators' positions as landed proprietors may have become stronger too. All senators had always been obliged to possess domains in Italy. Especially in the *regio prima*, the territory around Rome, but also in other parts of Italy, senatorial possessions were omnipresent, as Andermahr makes clear.¹⁵⁹ But in the third century senatorial landed property may have grown, as it may have done as well in Spain, North Africa, and other Mediterranean regions. Alexandra Chavarria Arnau remarks: 'Following the studies of Vera, based on an exhaustive documentation, there is now consensus that from the second century AD onwards there existed a tendency towards a concentration of rural property-ownership, at least in the Mediterranean area.'¹⁶⁰ Such a concentration of landed property does not necessarily mean a growth of enormous ranches, *latifundia*, but may as well have led to an amassing of middle-size farms and villas into a few hands, as seems to have happened in parts of Asia Minor.¹⁶¹ After 238 not many emperors unleashed waves of terror and confiscation against senators, as far as we can guess, if only because they did not have the time to do so; and if indeed the important nucleus of the 'Severan' senate displayed a strong continuity, as Inge Mennen suggests, a concentration of properties through intermarriage of rich senatorial families would have been a logical outcome.¹⁶² Besides, since 204, through Severus' *sacrae litterae*, senators were exempt from *hospitium*, the obligation to receive public guests against one's will.¹⁶³ Such guests could be soldiers or other government people. This must have saved many senators a lot of money. According to Drew-Bear and Eck, senators were also exempt from the obligation to fulfill local *munera* and from local burdens connected with the *cursus publicus*.¹⁶⁴ Anyhow, Aurelius Victor, one century later, thought that third-century senators were fabulously rich, as we have seen above.¹⁶⁵ Andermahr is more skeptical than Vera and Chavarria Arnau, though. She thinks that there is not sufficient evidence to find out whether senatorial possessions in Italy and elsewhere were growing.¹⁶⁶ If a concentration of landed property did take place, senators who profited may have been largely Italian. Provincial senators may after a very short career have gone to their old home regions, if only because a good part of their possessions were situated there.

Another point to be made is that after about 230 senatorial authority had fewer competitors in Rome and Italy, where emperors were less frequently present than

they had been before. During the years of crisis and the preceding period of escalating problems other functionaries who had been important to Rome and Italy, such as praetorian prefects and commanders of units that were Italy-based, were often equally far away. Permanently present Rome-based administrators, such as the *a rationibus* and sometimes the emperor's deputies for legal matters, did not have comparably powerful positions. The position of one of the most important senators, the *praefectus urbi*, however, became stronger. The urban prefecture was characterized by a high degree of continuity, both for the backgrounds of the office-holders and their field of activity. Their competences in Italy and Rome expanded.¹⁶⁷

The senatorial position was not only strong in Italy. Under the Severan dynasty, and probably also under the soldier-emperors who succeeded them, powerful senators who belonged to the nucleus of *consulares* had good connections with North Africa, especially Africa Proconsularis and Numidia, and with some more civilized and urbanized parts of Asia Minor. Quite a few of them came from those regions.¹⁶⁸ It is a remarkable coincidence that those areas belonged to the inner parts of the empire where senatorial *virī clarissimi* kept ruling provinces, even after 260.¹⁶⁹ Remarkably enough Gaul and Spain, equally rich and civilized parts of the empire, no longer provided many important senators.¹⁷⁰ A rich landed proprietor such as Sennius Sollemnis, a contemporary of several Severan emperors who was important to all parts of Gaul, and had been in contact with high Roman officials, did not become a senator or an important equestrian official.¹⁷¹ This must have been the consequence of the defeat of Albinus and the subsequent damage done to his supporters. There were not enough western senators to exert patronage effectively and get their protégés appointed.¹⁷²

That the position of the senate in Rome and Italy was not weak became visible in 238, 259–260, 268, and 271. In 238 the senate at Rome took sides with the Gordians. Good connections with Africa Proconsularis could at least partially explain why their reaction came so fast. The senate declared Maximinus Thrax and his son public enemies, sent letters to provincial governors to invite them to join the senate, and started to recruit soldiers among the *iuventus* of Italy, with whom leading senators apparently had good relations.¹⁷³ In 259–260, when Gallienus was fighting barbarians north of the Alps, the senate took the initiative to organize emergency militias to stop invading Germanic bands. One Germanic column was checked near Ravenna by such a militia, added to some remaining troops.¹⁷⁴ Another column was defeated by a similar mixed army in Etruria.¹⁷⁵ In 268 the senate, having heard of Gallienus' death, of its own initiative killed members of Gallienus' family and some of his helpers.¹⁷⁶ In 271 in Rome corrupt *monetarii* and senators who had been conniving with them could only be put down by the emperor Aurelian through devastating street fighting, followed by widespread executions.¹⁷⁷ Apparently they had developed into a strong group that was not completely under imperial control. One way to stop this development and restore the emperors' grip on Italy and Rome would have been to provincialize this old heartland of the empire. Two decades later the tetrarchs did this, be it for other, probably fiscal, reasons.

Did the *equester ordo* win what senators lost? First of all, in the third century AD there was not such a thing as an equestrian order. *Equites* constituted a large, heterogeneous group without corporate interest. Besides not all *equites* profited by changing appointment policies. During the Severan period and a few years after jurists of equestrian status had been appointed to high functions and had been important in the emperors' entourage. Jurists such as Papinian and Ulpian had even been praetorian prefects.¹⁷⁸ After about 240, however, this was a thing of the past. After that year scholarly jurists vanished from the imperial court and the higher equestrian functions. They were replaced by experienced men with military and logistical backgrounds.¹⁷⁹ Other victims of this change were Greek intellectuals, many of whom were comparable to *equites* or had obtained that rank. Some of them, such as Cassius Dio, had become senators. They too lost career opportunities, just at a time when Greek élites in the empire had begun to identify with the empire and Greek militias joined the fight against foreign invaders. Greek authors such as Cassius Dio and Herodian saw the rise of the military coming, and fiercely hated the soldiers of their own times.¹⁸⁰

An important consequence of changing appointment policies was that high social status and high *paideia* no longer inevitably coincided with the ability to exercise power in the Roman empire. Achieved status, obtained through actual military, logistical, and administrative merits became more important than ascribed status.¹⁸¹ Militarily and administratively skilled equestrian officers and governors took positions that had belonged to senators. At the end of their careers some of the *equites* belonging to the new power set were recompensed with senatorial status, which shows that traditional status markers continued, even when actual power relations were no longer corresponding with them.¹⁸² The knights who were appointed to top-level functions in the third century – praetorian prefects, *duces* who commanded armies in more than one province, equestrian provincial *praesides*, advisors of the emperors in their entourage – were not ‘gentlemen-amateurs’ as most senators had been and still were. These *equites* were not specialists in a modern sense of the word but did have more specialized military, logistical, and administrative skills than most senators would have had, their own careers being their main training ground. This could put at risk their authority among senators, kindred non-military and non-bureaucratic *equites*, and long-standing, civilized local élites. The members of the richest and most respected groups in society shared its *paideia* with local gentry and intellectuals in the more civilized parts of the empire. Already decades before 260 Philostratus had warned that governors in Greek-speaking provinces should know Greek and ought to be in sympathy with the provincial population.¹⁸³

The local level

Every non-bureaucratic empire needs supporting local and regional notables to rely on. The Roman empire was not completely non-bureaucratic, and may in the third century have been on its way to becoming semi-bureaucratic,¹⁸⁴ but its rulers nonetheless needed the benevolent aid of local élites to get taxes

raised, regional order and safety cared for, infrastructures maintained, and local administration done. *Dig.* 50.4.18.2–29 shows which tasks had to be done, and which financial obligations had to be paid. Unsalaries magistracies that brought with them expenditures were called *honores*, equally uncompensated obligations and obligatory munificences *munera* (Gr.: *leitourgiai*). *Munera* comprised *munera personalia* and *munera patrimoniorum*, i.e. obligations connected to persons who had to carry them out or properties to which they were attached. Patrimonial *munera* were those which had to be carried out at the expense of the patrimony (the property) and at a loss for the persons undertaking them. Obligations were tutelage (guardianship), the care for the financial accounts of the community, the production of recruits or horses or any other animals, the conveyance or accompaniment of goods, such as money belonging to the imperial treasury, the provision of care or clothing, *angareia* (providing means of transport, animals included), acquiring grain and oil, supervising the corn dole, supervising aqueducts, paving, and maintaining roads and streets that were on community territory, caring for public order and behavior (the office of the *irenarchs*), caring for the temples (the office of the temple-wardens), raising the poll-tax in community territory, participating in embassies to a governor, the emperor, and provincial meetings, and a number of minor tasks.

In this system much depended on the economic strength of a nucleus of wealthy land-owning families who continuously dominated local councils and were ready to fulfill all or most of those tasks. However, wealth and continuity were not always guaranteed. In his book on the bouleutic élite of Oxyrhynchus Rens Tacoma demonstrates how fragile local hierarchies could be, for demographic and other reasons.¹⁸⁵ There are a few indications that in the later second and third centuries *munera*, *honores*, and other financial burdens were not easy to allot to rich citizens of communities.¹⁸⁶ Problems with communal burdens are present throughout *Digesta* 50. In Egypt, the main source of the evidence, it may have been hard to allot local burdens ever since the start of Roman domination, but in the third century Egyptian communities seem to have witnessed extra difficulties in finding people who were prepared to participate in liturgies, finance the public services, and raise the taxes, as was demonstrated in chapter 3.¹⁸⁷ The prefects of Egypt and their assistants may have had problems with handling local élites. Colin Adams shows, on the basis of papyrus texts, that higher échelons of the bureaucracy in Egypt even at the end of the third century had to struggle hard to control local government.¹⁸⁸

Some inscriptions from the Bagradas Valley and other places in Africa Proconularis and from Asia Minor suggest that problems with liturgies, obligations, and the raising of taxes existed in other parts of the Roman world too.¹⁸⁹ It did not help that in the third century tenants living and working on the growing imperial domain did not have to contribute to local liturgies.¹⁹⁰ In regions where senators had large properties, such as central Italy, this would have applied to their equally growing domains as well.¹⁹¹ In a mutilated papyrus text which contains a copy of an imperial letter which J.H. Oliver convincingly ascribes to the emperor Severus Alexander, P. Fay. 20, we read that the emperor who has sent this letter will not

compel cities to contribute more golden crowns or sums due in place of them than they are able to give.¹⁹² A papyrus preserved in London points to the better days that cities enjoyed in the past.¹⁹³ Burdens were pushed off to the farmers living on the estates of the landed proprietors. Tenants who wished to evade those burdens or were not able to cope with them could have recourse to *anachoresis*, flight from the land, a phenomenon that was discussed above, in chapter 3. They would give up their parcels of land, go elsewhere, and try to find a landlord who was prepared to employ them and keep them out of official registration and – consequently – taxation. In some petitions farmers explicitly threatened to go away and so diminish the returns of the estates (some of which were imperial domains!) on which they were working.¹⁹⁴ It seems that emperors and provincial governors could not prevent this and were not able to track down tax – evading fugitives, which undoubtedly diminished their authority.

During the years of crisis but even before and after, there were some extra burdens, ensuing from enemy invasions and other violence. Particularly during the period of crisis local communities had to defend themselves. In cities where walls had not been maintained, they were repaired, and we are told that, in the absence of Roman garrisons, the citizens were forced to defend themselves.¹⁹⁵ According to Fergus Millar, the building of city walls, often rapidly done and enclosing restricted areas, is a common feature of the empire of the later third century, and does not distinguish between east and west.¹⁹⁶ Local communities had to fight invading bands as well. There was resistance by the inhabitants of Thrace and Moesia Inferior against invaders under Decius, at Marcianopolis and Philippopolis, although the resisting fighters in Philippopolis partly were surviving parts of Roman detachments, not just locals defending themselves.¹⁹⁷ Under Valerian and Gallienus local people defended their walls against barbarian raiders at Saldæ in North Africa.¹⁹⁸ In the opening year of the joint reign of those emperors a local leader named Demosthenes successfully withstood Persian looters who were besieging his town Caesarea in Cappadocia, until he was defeated through treason. He managed to get away himself, but Caesarea was thoroughly plundered.¹⁹⁹ Thessalonica had to help itself against invaders from the north about 253 and again in 262 and 267.²⁰⁰ During the 260s, the Athenians fortified their city for the first time since the days of Lucius Cornelius Sulla, and local Peloponnesian people built a wall over the Isthmus of Corinth.²⁰¹ In 256, in a period of serious invasions into Asia Minor from the north, local levies operated in the neighborhood of Termessos, in southwest Asia Minor.²⁰² In 1.32.1 Zosimus relates that ‘Scythians’ were plundering everywhere in Asia Minor and that local people withdrew into fortified strongholds to ward off the looting enemy.²⁰³ During the eventful years 267–271 many communities in war areas in Greece and Asia Minor had to help themselves.²⁰⁴ Under Claudius II there was resistance by local people against invading Goths and other bands at Anchialus, Nicopolis, Tomi, Marcianopolis, and Side.²⁰⁵ In HA *Claudius* 12.4 the author of the *Historia Augusta* tells us:

Sub hoc barbari qui superfuerant Anchialum vastare conati sunt, Nicopolim etiam obtinere. Sed illi provincialium virtute obtriti sunt (In his [Claudius

II's] time those barbarians who still survived [after Claudius' great victory over the Goths in 269] endeavored to lay waste Anchialus and even to seize Nicopolis, but they were crushed by the valor of the provincials).

Undoubtedly similar specimens of local self-help occurred in the western provinces and North Africa.²⁰⁶

Local self-help in some regions temporarily changed power relations between emperors, governors, and communities,²⁰⁷ but it was not a sign of a waning imperial monopoly of power. Local militias added military strength to imperial forces, and participating in local emergency forces increased feelings of loyalty to the emperor and his empire. Local emergency forces and their leaders showed that they did not want to take sides with invaders but were willing to fight for the empire. They wanted to keep plunderers away from their families and possessions but they also wished to assist the emperor and empire. In November 256 at Termessos Minor in Asia Minor a Valerius Statilius Castus was honored because he had brought peace at land and sea, probably through fighting brigands. In an inscription he is mentioned *praepositus vexillationum, symmachos tôn Sebastôn*. So he may have combined a local levy or posse with regular Roman military detachments.²⁰⁸ In 267–268, during the wars against the Goths and other invaders who were plundering the Balkans and parts of Asia Minor, there was co-operation between one of the Dexippi and the imperial fleet, and between Gallienus and two Byzantines, Cleodamus, and Athenaeus.²⁰⁹ Fighting the common enemy, such local leaders and forces became more like members of a commonwealth than subjects in an empire. This remarkable integration came on top of an existing development. Arrian and Lucian in the second century AD used the first person plural to refer to the inhabitants of the empire when contrasting them with enemies outside the empire.²¹⁰ In Philostratus' *Vita Apollonii* and *Vitae Sophistarum*, for example, the Romans are still 'the others' compared to people of Hellenic *paideia* who live in Greek-speaking parts of the empire,²¹¹ but having Apollonius of Tyana contrast the inhabitants of the empire with barbarians outside it Philostratus speaks of 'our kind of people' (VA 8.7.8).²¹²

Communities that ran into problems and could not cope with their burdens any more could be assisted by *curatores rei publicae* (Gr. *logistai*). Such curators were appointed through imperial letters, and had to reorganize and improve local public finances. They could inspect local budgets and properties, and recover public land that had been usurped by private persons. Their main sphere of action was Italy.²¹³ *Curatores rei publicae* are also attested in Africa and Asia Minor, like Italy highly urbanized parts of the empire that had to cope with rising logistical pressures.²¹⁴ Asia Minor had to cope with large armies passing along via military transit routes, actions of civil war, and from about 253 serious invasions. Like Italy Africa and the more civilized parts of Asia Minor harbored many large imperial and senatorial domains that could compete with local communities for good agricultural land.²¹⁵ Graham Burton published a convincing article about those Asian curators in 1979.²¹⁶ On the basis of his investigations one may conclude that in Asia Minor regional aristocrats, in local situations comparable with curators of

senatorial status in Italy, were selected to be city curators. Like those senators they had the social ascendancy to impress local notables. Not all curators were high-status men. Under Septimius Severus a *curator Atheniensium et Patrensi* operated in Achaëa who, according to Devijver, had started his career with three equestrian military posts, and then had become a senator.²¹⁷ A famous man who was not a senator at all, but nonetheless had the status to overawe local notables, could also do the job. A Greek epigraphical text from the time of Severus Alexander tells us that Ti. Claudius Frontonianus, a Greek intellectual who is described as a *logistes clarissimarum urbium*, had twice been the high priest of the provincial imperial cult in Asia, had been *agonothetes* and *rhetor*, and had also excellently (*epiphanôs*) served in three officer posts (*tres militiae*).²¹⁸ In Sardinia a military tribune, Lucius Magnus Fulvianus, was *curator rei publicae* of Turris Libisonis.²¹⁹

Local élites were important to the emperors not only because they did a lot of administrative and judicial work at the local level but also because many equestrian officers, and even some centurions, came from local gentry.²²⁰ As Hubert Devijver demonstrates, the local gentry had always been the main recruiting ground of equestrian officers, at least before the third-century crisis.²²¹ Quite a few career-inscriptions of equestrian officers show, or at least suggest, that these men came from local élite families or had other strong local connections, being patrons or curators of local communities, or having other strong connections with them.²²² Some officers made mention of the place they came from or belonged to, for example Ti. Antistius Marcianus (c. AD 200) in whose inscription we read that he was *domo Circina*.²²³ So not only senators who had been *curatores rei publicae* or were patrons of local communities had good relations with local notables, above all in Italy and the high-status provinces of Africa and Asia, but equestrian officers as well, and in more regions than just those three. That towns and even villages could have strong relations with military men is also demonstrated by two epigraphical texts which were discussed above. A military man, called Pyrrhus, handed in the petition by the villagers of Skaptopara (in Thrace), which was addressed to Gordian III. He was a Skaptoparene himself, a local landed proprietor.²²⁴ The people living in the village of Aragua in Phrygia had the military man Didymus deliver their petition to the emperor Philip.²²⁵ Soldiers and officers not only took goods, services, and commodities from local communities, they also had good connections with some of them and defended them before the emperor.

Local élites had never been the only recruiting ground of equestrian officers. According to Eric Birley, both municipal notables and long-serving military men had always both been admitted to the centurionate, both having a chance to make a career afterwards.²²⁶ One might think that after 193, and certainly after 235, more career soldiers, coming from lower ranks and not from the curial order, found their way to the higher officer grades, and even to governorships and other high functions. During the first decades of the third century there were, for example, Marcus Oclatinus Adventus, Publius Valerius Comazon, and the emperor Maximinus Thrax.²²⁷ There are good reasons to suppose that there may have been more such men in the second half of the third century. To them belonged, for example, many of the *praepositi vexillationis* mentioned above.

Here we just mention two illustrative careers. Aelius Aelianus, one of Gallienus' protectors, may have been raised in a military camp as a son of a *custos armorum*, warden of the armory, and probably started his career as an *evocatus*, a veteran soldier staying within the army. He ultimately became prefect of the second legion Adiutrix in Pannonia Inferior and probably also governor of Mauretania Caesariensis.²²⁸ Another military who came up from lower ranks was Traianus Mucianus, another one of Gallienus' *protectores*. He may have started his long career as a soldier in Gallienus' new army, have fought against the Goths in 267, and have been a cavalryman in the praetorian guard. Still under Gallienus he became a centurion, serving in this grade in the thirteenth legion Gemina, one of the cohorts of the *vigiles*, an urban cohort, and the fifth cohort of the praetorian guard, to continue his military career as a *primus pilus*, *dux*, and *praepositus* of *vexillationes* of the legions IV Flavia and VII Claudia (Danube region).²²⁹

Did local élites during the period of crisis in the third century lose power and influence? In other words, did this network become weaker, and consequently less helpful, to imperial administration? It is not easy to tell. The curial order had to sustain heavy burdens, no longer had sufficient means to finance prestigious buildings, and in many cases had to finance fortification and self-help against invading enemies. *Curiales* had to accept interference by foraging officers, fund-raising *praesides*, and *curatores rei publicae*. However, even so the local networks remained as ever the mainstay of imperial authority at the lower level of administration and jurisdiction. There was no mature bureaucracy that could take over their tasks.

There were conflicting tendencies. On the one hand connections between emperors and local communities were becoming stronger through co-operation against invading enemies and a stronger identification with the empire now that the risks of its demise were becoming clear; but on the other hand traditional bonds may have become weaker. As we have seen above, career opportunities for – locally important – Greek intellectuals were becoming fewer from about 240 onwards.²³⁰ Another medium that had for ages cemented relations between Greek-speaking notables and Roman governors and emperors, the imperial cult, may have lost some of its significance. Locally and regionally important people were involved in it. As Steven Friesen says in a contribution on the cult of the Roman emperors at Ephesos:

The cities of Asia had come upon a new way of expressing both their cohesion and their competition; the imagery of neokoros provided new ways to debate and revise their relationships to each other and the imperial center, affirmed the provincial network, even as the participants elbowed for positions within that network. These new developments were articulated in terms of the worship of the emperor. The competition took place in a regulated framework and served purposes of order in the province. The temple of the Sebastoi and their related institutions introduced a new rhetoric and a host of new activities and relationships, responsibilities, and honors for the elite sectors of the province. Asia paved the way and other provinces followed suit.²³¹

According to Marietta Horster, priesthoods in the imperial cult became popular among local notables in Greek-speaking cities, to the detriment of the availability of potential priests for more traditional cults.²³² A decay of the imperial cult would negatively influence the intercourse of emperors, governors, and provincial élites, and would weaken this source of imperial power. It seems that after 235 the imperial cult indeed entered a phase of decline.²³³

The emperor's bureaucracy

What the imperial government always needed, in the third century as before, was a good administrative apparatus. Which were the groups that might be labeled as parts of a third-century imperial bureaucracy? First of all the so-called *caesariani*, 'the emperors' men.' They comprised the personnel of the imperial offices at Rome, of which the *officium* of the *a rationibus* was the largest one, administrative personnel of provincial governors, and the men who managed the imperial domains.²³⁴ Under Septimius Severus and Caracalla imperial domains had been growing in size and numbers, owing to confiscations of properties. The enlarged imperial domain began to become a kind of public entity, and was no longer the private property of the man who happened to be emperor. According to Herodian, in 193 Pertinax already made a difference between his own private possessions and imperial property.²³⁵ The inevitable result was that the staff that managed the imperial domains became a kind of official bureaucracy consisting of freeborn and freedmen personnel that had to raise as many supplies as they could. That the *caesariani* who managed imperial domains were becoming an honorable official bureaucracy, which freeborn educated men could enter without shame, is also indicated by P.Oxy 1, 58, AD 288. Colin Adams observes that it is apparent from the accounts alone that many persons wishing to batten onto the estates of the treasury devised titles for themselves, such as administrators, secretaries, or superintendents, whereby they procured no advantage for the treasury, but ate up the revenues. For freeborn persons it had never been attractive to enter a servile retinue of the emperor, but it could really be advantageous for them to obtain a post within the official service of the imperial domains.²³⁶

The most important bureau in Rome was that of the *a rationibus*. The personnel of this bureau stayed in Rome and did not travel with the emperor. This bureau not only managed imperial finances, it had an ever-more important logistical task as well. It may even have exerted some supervision or control over the procurators in the various provinces.²³⁷ The other imperial bureaux were those of the *ab epistulis* (*Graecis* and *Latinis*), *a libellis*, *a studiis*, *a cognitionibus*, and *a memoria*. During the third century administrative substitution was a common phenomenon. Just to relieve the burden of legal work, and to have a deputy back in Rome when campaigning elsewhere, emperors appointed *iudices vice Caesaris*. There were also substitutes for provincial governors and for praetorian and urban prefects.²³⁸ This must have meant that parts of those bureaux – like that of the *a rationibus* – also stayed back in Rome to serve those deputies, even when the emperors themselves were practically continuously camping in

theatres of war. If so, this must have strengthened the formal, institutional character of those bureaux.

The clerical grades within the imperial bureaux were analyzed by Weaver, and some 30 years later by Werner Eck. In his view freedmen continued to occupy senior posts in the Palatine bureaucracy up to the reign of Septimius Severus, above all in the office of the *a rationibus*. The bureaux were since Hadrian's times led by equestrians, who by the beginning of the third century were assisted by equally equestrian auxiliary heads.²³⁹ In the provinces the *procuratores Augusti* and many procurators managing large domains or clusters of domains were *equites* but were assisted by freedmen procurators, in a dual system.²⁴⁰ What happened beyond 260 is not clear. Provincial *praesides* united administrative and fiscal tasks into their own hands, and the provincial procurators disappeared, but what happened to the offices of former governors and procurators, now standing under new model *praesides*? According to Peter Eich, in the second half of the third century they gradually became more homogeneous and more like real *officia*.²⁴¹ Rudolf Haensch convincingly argues that freedmen *tabularii* and comparable *officiales* already now, in the third century, were getting an enhanced status as *caesariani*. The old personal retinues of governors had consisted of freedmen, military personnel seconded from nearby armies, provincial notables, and personal followers, but the provincial offices of the new *praesides* may gradually have become bureaucratic organs of state, which developed their own ways, and became more independent from individual magistrates. Staffs of governors and procurators tended to become offices connected with the governorship instead of private councils linked to governors. According to Rudolf Haensch, *tabularii* and comparable other *officiales* in the third century were becoming more independent from their governors.²⁴² The word *caesarianus* got a new significance, denoting a subaltern civil official, freedman or freeborn, carrying out financial and logistical tasks. That *caesarianus* had become a current term already by mid-century is indicated by petitions, in which peasants or other locals complain about the greed and misconduct of soldiers, tax collectors, and *caesariani*. It is also shown by a letter that the emperor Valerian in 257 sent to all provinces in the empire. In this letter he announces an empire-wide persecution of Christians, ordaining that recalcitrant clergymen should be put to death, that Christian senators and knights who refuse to sacrifice to the traditional gods and on the emperors' altar should lose their property, and that if they continued to refuse they too should be executed. Recalcitrant *caesariani* were to be deported to the mines and Christian *matronae* refusing to sacrifice were to be exiled and would have their property confiscated.²⁴³

Another group that belonged to the 'imperial bureaucracy' consisted of the military who had been seconded from their units to man stations at strategic points in the provinces, do police work, gather information, raise supplies, or assist provincial authorities. Military men of practically all grades could act as go-betweens, accept petitions, arrest criminals, watch over mines or quarries, and accompany tax collectors. Some military personnel belonged to the governors' personal staff. Of great importance were centurions and *primi pili* (the highest centurions).

They had always been involved in all kinds of military, administrative, and logistical work.²⁴⁴ *Primi pili* stood at the head of the *officia* of provincial governors.²⁴⁵ At public manifestations, such as funerals of members of imperial dynasties, centurions had been a category of their own, already since the first period of the Principate.²⁴⁶ In his 'Maecenas speech' Dio mentions centurions as a group in contemporary Roman imperial society, along with senators, knights, *caesariani*, local notables, imperial freedmen, soldiers, the populace of Rome, and the *demoi* of the other cities.²⁴⁷ Centurions could become *praepositi* (commanders) of *vexillationes* of legions, and could – like *praepositi* – be charged with independent functions in military districts in border regions, for example in peacekeeping or judicial work.²⁴⁸ Some of them acted as executioners. In 78.39.5–40.5. Cassius Dio tells us that Macrinus and his son were arrested and executed by centurions. Centurions who operated as supervisors in given areas could be called *centuriones regionarii*.²⁴⁹

According to Brian Dobson, the *primipilarii* (former *primi pili*) had always been an important group. To many *primi pili* this rank had been the highest they could reach for but some of them became prefects of the camp, under a legionary commander, or were appointed to the tribunates in Rome. A few got access to an equestrian career.²⁵⁰ Centurions were either former soldiers who through a military career ultimately had reached the centurionate, or they were young local notables, or even *equites* who started their career as centurions, being directly appointed to that rank, without making a long military career first.²⁵¹ Even in the third quarter of the third century, when this profession had become dangerous and full of risks, there was still competition to obtain a centurionate. In *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7.15 Eusebius tells us about the *martyrium* of a man called Marinus (probably under Claudius II) who was of high birth and wealth, in other words, a local notable. He was to become centurion but suddenly a competitor came forward accusing him that he was a Christian, whereupon he had to make up his mind: sacrifice to the gods and deified emperors, or die.

Other military who were involved in administrative, coercive, or logistical tasks were *beneficiarii*, *frumentarii*, and other *stationarii*. *Beneficiarii* were soldiers who had to fulfill special tasks, either within military camps or outside, at *stationes* along the main roads and in towns and villages.²⁵² They had to do administrative and service work in military camps, police duties, fiscal work, and tasks in the execution of justice. Some of them manned stations that they shared with customs officers and fiscal personnel, which made them acquainted with the work such people did.²⁵³ Some larger stations must have belonged to the logistical infrastructure of the Roman army. The many wars necessitated the building up of an infrastructure, also in the interior of the empire, especially along important transit routes.²⁵⁴ The most important *beneficiarii* were the *beneficiarii consularis* who were connected with provincial government, but procurators also had *beneficiarii* at their disposal.²⁵⁵ In weakly urbanized regions, such as the border provinces along the Danube, their stations had become numerous since Antonine times. From those times onwards a network of *stationes* covered one region after the other: first in the Rhine and Danube areas, and then also in Asia Minor, that is

in regions where armies were stationed, fought, or went through, and consequently logistical burdens were heavy.²⁵⁶ Dise concludes:

The Antonine revival of the statio-network inaugurated a century-long era during which these posts, each manned by one or two *beneficarii consularis*, proliferated rapidly until they became a frequent presence in the towns and along the roads of the provinces of the imperial frontiers, and an important element in the administrative infrastructure of the empire. Of greatest significance, however, is the Antonines' reconfiguration of the relationship between the seconded soldiers who manned that infrastructure and the aristocrats who formed its executive echelon. By attaching those soldiers to the governorship rather than to the governor himself, the Antonines strengthened the institutional structure of the administrative apparatus and laid the basis of the careerist and functionally specialized *officium consularis* of the third century.²⁵⁷

In other words, another specimen of institutionalization indicating a process of bureaucratization. Like other provincial *caesariani*, military men serving in the provinces were gradually becoming *officiales*. Like *beneficarii*, *frumentarii* were soldiers who had to fulfill special tasks. They were employed on individual missions and could be sent anywhere. They were involved in police work, gathering information, and raising supplies. In petitions against too heavy requisitioning they are regularly mentioned together with *kolletores*.²⁵⁸ Sometimes they served at *stationes*, like *beneficarii*. Coming from armed forces in many regions of the empire, they were concentrated in the *castra peregrina* in Rome, from which they were sent to all kinds of posts and stations in the empire.²⁵⁹ A few of them completed spectacular careers, for example Oclatinus Adventus, the man who in AD 217–218 made it to the praetorian prefecture.²⁶⁰ Both *frumentarii* and *beneficarii* obtained a lot of experience in raising funds and supplies and gathering information, especially if they were sent to one station after the other, and got thoroughly acquainted with the work they had to do there. Both groups had a chance to become centurions and make a military/administrative career, especially from the reign of Septimius Severus onwards.²⁶¹

It is not probable that the *officia* of the second half of the third century were partly or completely militarized.²⁶² This might have had a simple reason: all military were needed at the various fronts and borders.²⁶³ This transformation was not systematic but a consequence was that at the end of the third century or at the start of the fourth the last *beneficarii* had disappeared from the offices of the governors, and that in the course of the third century *primi pili*, who apparently already under Septimius Severus had been involved in raising the *annona* for the soldiers, changed from military officers into civil servants with tasks in military logistics.²⁶⁴

4.4. Conclusions

The great wars that broke out after 230 showed that Roman military superiority over the enemies in the north and east was no longer a matter of course. There

were defeats, usurpations, devastations, and deportations in many Roman provinces, and a partial loss of the monopoly of state violence because the emperors had to accept help from effectively independent allies and local emergency militias. This was not just a loss. Local people who in a kind of self-help opposed invading bands thus integrated themselves more than before into the Roman imperial system, which strengthened the imperial base of power. The reforms, which came about after 260, such as Gallienus' new army and a different appointment policy regarding officers and legionary commanders (more experienced *equites* and no more senators), contributed to a military recovery, but even so the imperial potential for victory became a matter of doubt. Managing the military, never an easy task, became more difficult, now that the soldiers could no longer take victory for granted and were regularly confronted with hunger, disease, and a malfunctioning of military logistics. Good and efficient military leadership of the emperors and their staff consequently became more important. The soldiers had to be paid and fed as well as was possible, even if this resulted in debasement of the imperial coinage and arbitrary requisitioning, which in their turn eroded imperial authority among the population of the empire. Yet the emperors had to raise more provisions from Italy and the provinces because they were becoming more dependent on the support of the military forces than ever. So they had to make provincial administration and their rule in Italy more efficient in raising money and supplies. Especially in threatened areas, such as border provinces, jurisdiction, administration, and fiscal authority were united in the hands of new equestrian *praesides* who could raise taxes and commodities more efficiently. Threatened border areas came to be defended by experienced *duces* whose command stretched over more than one province, so that they could react more swiftly to changing military situations. In other areas, particularly in less threatened inner provinces, traditional ways of provincial administration were maintained. Some of those provinces kept being governed by senators. So the empire began to have two co-existing systems of provincial government.

An important base of imperial political power had always been co-operation with the higher orders in society, *i.e.* with senators, knights, and local gentry. Another one was the efficiency of the imperial bureaucracy. From 260 onwards, but even before, the emperors took a risk with the support of the senators. Senators lost career opportunities and functions in the army and the emperor's service through a process of replacement by militarily and logistically more experienced *equites*, which accelerated after 260. On the other hand they probably became more influential in Italy, Rome, and perhaps some civilized inner provinces such as Africa. Nor did they lose much status. They started to make careers that were more like the traditional high-status patrician careers. The nucleus of senatorial families that had come to the fore under the Severan emperors maintained itself and thus gave some continuity to the senate in Rome. The continuity that characterized the nucleus of the 'Severan' senate probably gave some important senatorial families the chance to expand their property. There is no sign that the senate or a majority of senators stopped supporting the emperors.

Jurists and other intellectuals lost influence in the emperor's entourage, which after about 240 came to be dominated by military knights. *Caesariani* and the staffs assisting provincial governors coalesced into a personal bureaucracy of the emperors and their governors, which prefigured fourth-century bureaucracy. *Equites* with a military background and other officers got more career opportunities and became more important in the government of the empire and the emperors' entourage. In the turmoil of the third century this worked fairly well; but in the long run these developments kept able men from higher functions in the administration, opened opportunities to local notables to join the bureaucracy and shirk their obligations, and created a wider gap between emperors and subjects, more bureaucracy being inserted between them. The cultural atmosphere at top levels of the Roman imperial administration undoubtedly changed: high social status and high *paideia* no longer inevitably coincided with the ability to exercise power in the Roman empire.

Notes

- 1 See Hebblewhite 2017, 140–2.
- 2 See Reynolds 1982, 42, nr. 6, and 101–3, nr. 12.
- 3 See above, ch. 2, pp. 54–93.
- 4 Dexippus, frg. 23 Martin, 6. This is an oration written by a Greek author who puts it into the emperor's mouth. This may diminish its suitability to be used as a source. However, Dexippus was an eye-witness who focused on this region of the empire. In an oration of this kind he probably sketched a situation that was not far from actual historical reality.
- 5 See below, pp. 185f., 201.
- 6 See ch. 2, pp. 65–86.
- 7 See above, ch. 2, p. 78.
- 8 See ch. 2, pp. 43, 46, 57.
- 9 De Blois 1998–1999, 270 with notes 27–9.
- 10 De Blois 1998, 3409–12.
- 11 De Blois 1998, 3421.
- 12 A kind of people that is extra fond of money and is only loyal and good when gaining material profits.
- 13 HA *Probus* 23.1–5.
- 14 See De Blois 1986, 279–88; idem 1998, 3428–31.
- 15 See Eis Basilea 30–31, translated into English by Swift 1966, 279–80.
- 16 See above, pp. 62f., 136. A good survey of these texts is given by Mitchell in Eck 1999, 40–4.
- 17 See Herrmann 1990, 62–4; cf. Ando 2000, 97f. See the petition from Takina (AD 212–213) *apud* Sahin and French 1987, 137 and Hauken 1998, 224.
- 18 See Hebblewhite 2017, 77. Regular pay continued to exist but lost much of its purchasing power (*ibidem* pp. 87f.).
- 19 See Duncan-Jones 1994, 40f.; Lee 2007, 58f.
- 20 Duncan-Jones 1994, 41, table 3.6.
- 21 Herodian 2.11.7f.
- 22 Cassius Dio 77.9.3–5.
- 23 See De Blois 1976, 97f.
- 24 See RIC V 1, 48, nrs 129f. (*antoniniani*, AD 257, mint of Rome, Victoriae Augustorum iterum Germanicae); 69, nr. 17 (*ant.*, AD 258–259, mint of Cologne,

- Germanicus Maximus V); 72, nr. 60 (*ant.*, AD 258–259, mint of Cologne, Germ. Max. V); 81, nrs 141f. (*ant.*, AD 255–257, mint of Rome, Germ. Max. ter); 137, nrs 83–6 (*aurei*, sole reign, numbered *victoriae*); 156f., nrs 292–5, 302, 304–6 (*ant.*, sole reign, mint of Rome, numbered *victoriae*); 165 nrs 396–8 (*sest.*, sole reign, mint of Rome, Victoria Aug. S.C. III); 165 nr. 399 (*sest.*, sole reign, mint of Rome, Victoria Aug.S.C. VI); 166, nr. 410 (*dup.*, sole reign, mint of Rome, Vict. Aug. VII); 168f. nrs 434f. (*dup.*, sole reign, mint of Rome, Vict.Aug. III S.C. and Vict. Ger.II), p. 176 nrs 519 and 521 (*aurei*, sole reign, mint of Milan, Vict.Gal.Aug.III and II); p. 177, nrs. 524–8 (*aurei*, sole reign, mint of Milan, Vict.Aug. II, III, VII, VIII, and VIII). Over-optimistically, Mark Hebblewhite maintains that throughout the third-century crisis imperial acclamations remained connected to actual military achievements but has to admit that we lack the evidence to securely connect individual acclamations to specific events (Hebblewhite 2017, 51).
- 25 Ammianus Marcellinus 30.8.8.
- 26 See Mitthof 2001, 78–81.
- 27 See above, ch. 2, p. 60.
- 28 See Zosimus 1.18.3; Zonaras 12.18; HA *Gordiani tres* 29.2.
- 29 Any kind of extra benefiting middle cadre officers is not apparent in the careers of middle cadre officers. In the careers leading up to the centurionate and careers of centurions and *primi pili*, there was much continuity from the second to the mid-third century. See Faure 2013, 157–63, 175.
- 30 Cassius Dio 78.32.4.
- 31 That there were indeed divided loyalties among the military of the ‘Illyrian’ armies in 249 was convincingly argued by Christian Körner. See Körner 2002, 296–9, a passage on an inscription from Aquincum, AE 1935, 164.
- 32 Christol 1977, 394–408.
- 33 On his career see CIL XI 1836 = ILS 1332 (Arretium); PIR² P 313; PLRE I, Volusianus 6; Devijver 1976, 639–41, P 30; Christol 1977, 394; Dobson 1978, 306–8, nr. 215; Johne *et al.* 2008, II, 1967, PU 16 and 1073, PPO 13; Mennen 2011, 227–9.
- 34 Christol 1977, 394–405. On Aelius Aelianus see Dobson 1978, 312, nr. 220, Aelius Aelianus, who had been born in Pannonia Inferior, had been brought up in an army camp near Aquincum as a son of a *custos armorum*, and during Gallienus’ sole reign became *praefectus legionis II Adiutricis*, *protector*, *agens vices legati* of Pannonia Inferior at some time between 260 and 267, *praeses Mauretaniae Caesariensis*, and was honored *ob prostratam gentem Bavarum Mesegnentium praedasque omnes ac familias eorum abductas*. See also PIR² A129; PLRE I, Aelianus 7, 8, and 10, and Mennen 2011, 229. On Aurelius Victor see Mennen 2011, 230. He became *procurator et praeses Mauretaniae Caesariensis* and *protector* in 263, after reaching the rank of *primipilaris*. As *primus pilus* and *protector* he had accompanied Gallienus. He may be the man mentioned on Gallienus’ so-called arch, which actually is an Augustan gate in the Servian wall. See ILS 548 = CIL VI 1106 and LTUR I, 93 (E. Rodriguez Almeida). See PIR² A 1634 and PLRE I Victor 11. On Traianus Mucianus see Christol 1977; Dobson 1978, 313–16, nr. 223, Traianus Mucianus; Mennen 2011, 230f. He presumably started his career as a soldier in Gallienus’ mobile field army, and was a cavalryman in the praetorian guard. He became *centurio legionis XIII Geminae*, and centurion with the *vigiles*, an urban cohort, and the fifth praetorian cohort, in all those functions as a *protector*. Then in a not known unit he became *princeps protectorum*, and ultimately *primus pilus*. His patron may have been the praetorian prefect Heraclianus. Subsequently he also became *dux* or *praepositus*, and commanded *vexillationes* of the legions IV Flavia and VII Claudia. He made a career stretching over about forty years. On Vitalianus see ILS 546 = CIL III 3228: *Iovi Monitori pro salute atque incolunitate d.n. Gallieni*

- Aug. Et militum vexillationum legionum Germaniciarum et Britannicarum cum auxilis earum ... Vitalianus protector Aug. praepositus votum posuit.* On Marcellinus see Dobson 311, nr. 219, Clementius Valerius Marcellinus; see also PLRE I, Marcellinus 23; Mennen 2011, 229.
- 35 Traianon Moukianon douka/ strateusamenon en xôrtêi a' Kon/kordiênsiôn kai en legiôni b' Parthikêi, ippea chôtês/ z' praitôrias, êbokaton, hekatontarchon, protêktora bigoulôn/ hekatontarchon pro/têktora ourbianikianon kai hekatontarchon protêktora/ chôtês e' praitôrias/ kai prinkipa protêktora, preimopilarion, kai ek tôn / ... diexerchomenôn ...
- 36 See De Blois 1976, 37–57; Christol 1982, 143–66; Eich 2005, 342–50. Cf. Heil in Johnes 2008, II, 741–52; Mennen 2011, 139–44, 227–31.
- 37 Millar 1992, 234.
- 38 De Blois 1976, 55f. Cf. Hartmann ap. Johnes *et al.* 2006, 100–18; Mennen 2011, 227–37. Gallienus' father and predecessor may have started forming such a staff. In HA Trg tyr 10.14 we read that it was not from Gallienus that Regalianus received his promotion, but from his father, Valerian, as did also Claudius, Macrianus, Ingenuus, Postumus, and Aureolus. Though coming from the author of the *Historia Augusta*, this might be reliable information, specific information that he found in his sources.
- 39 On the conspiracy against Gallienus and his death see above, ch. 2, p. 86.
- 40 See above, ch. 2, pp. 55, 63, 78, 80f.
- 41 See Noreña 2011: 77–82 (Virtus Augusti), 109, and 147–65 (victory ideology on imperial coins). See the volume edited by Fabian Goldbeck and Johannes Wienand, *Der römische Triumph in Prinzipat und Spätantike*, Berlin 2017.
- 42 HA *Aurelianus* 23.2f.
- 43 Cassius Dio 80.1.1.
- 44 See above, pp. 80, 87.
- 45 Hekster 2015, 25.
- 46 See Cassius Dio 75.1.1f.; Herodian 2.13.1–12.
- 47 In 2.10.9 Herodian tells us that his soldiers called Septimius Severus Augustus and Pertinax after he had spoken to them about his planned usurpation.
- 48 On the doubling of the soldiers' pay see Speidel, M.A. 2009, 367, 371 (table 4), and 380 (table 7). On Severus representing himself as Commodus' brother in the senate's house see Cassius Dio 75.7.4 (much to the senators' dismay). On Caracalla's official name see Kienast 2004.
- 49 HA *Gallienus* 7.2: (Gallienus) denique ad vindictam Byzantium processit. Et cum non putaret recipi se posse muris, receptus alia die omnes milites inermes armatorum corona circumdatos interemit, fracto foedere quod promiserat (Then finally he went forth to avenge the wrongs of the Byzantines. And whereas he had no expectation of being received within the walls, he was admitted next day, and then, after placing a ring of armed men around the disarmed soldiers, contrary to the agreement he had made he caused them all to be slain). The only source is a passage from the HA but we may accept it because it focuses on a region that was treated with priority by Dexippus, one of the sources of the HA. This information may come from his work.
- 50 'A useful, necessary, brave, and vigorous emperor.' See above, ch. 2, p. 86.
- 51 HA *Gallienus* 13.8. On the HA and Dexippus see Paschoud 1991, 217–69.
- 52 As told by Cassius Dio, an eye-witness. See Cassius Dio 74.13.5. In 74.15.2 Dio relates that Niger, having heard about it, was proud to be summoned by the populace of Rome. So the event was considered important enough to send a message to Syria, to Niger.
- 53 Herodian 2.9.1f. On Niger's deterioration into inertia see Cassius Dio 75.6.1–2a.
- 54 Duncan-Jones 1994, 45.
- 55 See Cassius Dio 78.32.4.

- 56 On Gallus' reign see above, ch. 2, p. 69.
- 57 On this often neglected factor, the effects of long marches by large armies, see Cosme 2009, 208f.
- 58 As the emperor Valerian did in 257, marching from Cologne to the east. See above, p. 76.
- 59 See Huttner in Johne 2008, I, 211f.
- 60 See above, ch. 2, p. 72.
- 61 See HA *Gallienus* 1.2; 2.1; Zonaras 12.23. Shapur's harim: Zonaras 12.23.
- 62 In an extant fragment of the work of the Anonymus Continuator Dionis, fig 3, FHG IV, 193, Macrianus is anachronistically called *comes sacrarum largitionum*, which indicates that Samosata was a logistical base.
- 63 Herodian 3.2.2.
- 64 Herodian 7.11–12. See ch. 2, p. 60.
- 65 Eutropius 9.7; Orosius 7.22.7.
- 66 See Zosimus 1.37.2. Cf. Eutropius 9.8.2. See above, p. 79 with n403, n404.
- 67 This 'garrison' consisted of the praetorian guard, the legion II Parthica, the soldiers belonging to the imperial fleets at Ravenna and Misenum, the *cohortes urbanae*, and the *vigiles* at Rome. A good part of the praetorians and the soldiers of the legion II Parthica were often on the move together with the emperors, and so were many fleet-soldiers and some important magistrates.
- 68 AE 1993, 1231b (the so-called Augsburg inscription): 'In honorem domus divinae/ deae sanctae Victoriae/ ob barbaros gentis Semnonum/ sive Iuthungorum die/ VIII et VII kalendarum Maiarum caesos/ fugatosque a militibus provinciae/ Raetiae sed et Germanicianis itumque popularibus, excussis/ multis milibus Italarum captivorum/ compos votorum suorum/ M. Simplicius Genialis, vir perfectissimus agens vices praesidis/ cum eodem exercitu libens merito posuit/ dedicata III idus Septembres imperatore domino nostro/ Postumo Aug. et Honoratiano consulibus.' See above, ch. 2, p. 79.
- 69 See above, ch. 2, pp. 80f.
- 70 See above, ch. 2, pp. 62, 74, 76, 85.
- 71 See Martin and Grusková 2014b, 106f.
- 72 HA *Claudius* 11.1. See Zosimus 1.44.
- 73 On this issue see De Blois 2014a, 187–96.
- 74 Cf. Ioannes Antiochenus, in FHG IV 593, 140 who copies Herodian's version.
- 75 See the evidence assembled by Dobson 1978, 267 nr. 151, 269–70 nr. 154, 279 nr. 167, 288 nr. 182, 301 nr. 205, 304 nr. 212, 322 nr. 234, 306–8 nr. 215, and 313–16 nr. 223. Speidel, M.A. 2007, 416 adds C. Iulius Pacatianus, referring to AE 1984, 919 and CIL XII 1856 = ILS 1353 = AE 1960, 247 from Vienna. The career of Aurelius Gaius (later decades of the third century) is telling. He served in the legions I Italica (Moesia Inferior), VIII Augusta (Strasbourg), and I Iovia Scythica in Pannonia. He started his career as a trainee in a cavalry unit, then he became a mounted lancer, *optio* under three successive centurions, and *optio* of the *comites* of the commander the legion I Iovia Scythica, under the Tetrarchy. He traveled through the entire empire, to a multitude of provinces, to return at the end of his career to his place of birth, Pessinus in Asia Minor. See AE 1981, 777 (time of Diocletian) and Cosme 2009, 217.
- 76 Cosme in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 239–60, esp. 255; Coulston in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 535 and 538. On p. 535 Coulston speaks about a shift away from mediterranean clothing styles as represented on Trajan's column and in 1st–2nd-century funerary art towards either northern European or Levantine fashions. There is continuity in terms of arms and armor but the differences in equipment which used to distinguish the legionary citizen troops from auxiliary *peregrini* effectively disappeared in the third century.
- 77 See above, ch. 1, p. 4.
- 78 See above, pp. 4–5.

- 79 Potter 1990, 8; Duncan-Jones 1994, 5f. Such functionaries are mentioned in CIL XI 6337 = ILS 1422 (Ti. Claudius Zeno Ulpianus); CIL VI 1634 = ILS 1423 (Q. Valerius Postimius Romulus); Pflaum 1960, II, 645–6, nr. 240 (Lollianus).
- 80 Cassius Dio 77.4.1–6.1; Herodian 4.6.1–5. See above, pp. 46f.
- 81 Mennen 2011, 49–81.
- 82 On the rebellion of *monetarii* and conniving senators in Rome, see Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 35.6. CF. Epitome 35.4; Eutropius 9.14; HA Aurelianus 38.1f.
- 83 Mennen 2011, 79.
- 84 See Mennen in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 111–19; idem 2011, 91–3. See PIR² C 210 (C. Caesonius Macer Rufinianus, career from c. 178 to the times of Severus Alexander); PIR² C 209 (L. Caesonius Lucillus Macer Rufinianus, career from c. 215 to about 241 or even 254); PIR² C 212 and O 186 (L. Caesonius Ovinus Manlius Rufinianus Bassus, career from about 235–40 to 295). The second one, L. Caesonius Lucillus Macer Rufinianus, about 242–4 became deputy emperor in legal matters, *electus ad cognoscendas vice Caesaris cognitiones*. See Peachin 1996, 112f., referring to CIL XIV 3902 = ILS 1186, Tibur.
- 85 Mennen 2011, 93–134.
- 86 See Christol 2006b, 1839–70.
- 87 See Pflaum 1960, I, 472–6, nr. 181, esp. 474. Dionysius was a *libellis* et a *cognitionibus* of Commodus, after having been *ducenarius praefectus vehiculorum a copis Augusti per Flaminiam* and *consiliarius Augusti (ad LX milia nummum)*, probably during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. See CIL X 6662 = ILS 1455 from Antium. In this text there is no name, but it seems to have been dedicated to Dionysius, who is called a *iuris peritus*.
- 88 See ILS 1140 = CIL 4114; PIR² C 823. As an *eques* Candidus was *praefectus cohortis II civium Romanorum* (c. 172–5), *tribunus militum legionis II Augustae* (situated in Britain, c. 175–7), *praepositus copiarum expeditionis Germanicae secundae* (c. 177–80), an important logistical function, and *procurator XX hereditatum per Gallias Lugdunensem et Belgicam et utrumque Germaniam* (c. 180–2). Having been admitted to the senatorial order, *inter praetorios item tribunicios*, Candidus was *legatus pro praetore* (second in command) *provinciae Asiae, curator civitatis Teanensium, logista civitatis splendidissimae Nicomedensium item Ephesiorum, dux exercitus Illyrici expeditione Asiana item Parthica item Gallica, legatus pro praetore Augusti provinciae Hispaniae Citerioris et in ea dux terra marique adversus rebelles hostes publicos* (against supporters of Albinus, opponent of Severus in 196–7) *item Asiae item Noricae*, and *XV vir sacris faciundis*. According to Devijver, Candidus was also *legatus legionis X Geminae* from 190 to 193, in Pannonia, where he met Severus, and in 193 *pro legato Pannoniae Superioris*, to replace Severus. See Pflaum 1960, I, 548f, nr. 203; Devijver 1976, 244–6, C 128; Leunissen 1989, 49. note 105, 97, 110f., 153, 248, 347ff. 362, esp. 381; Mennen 2011, 196, 199, and 201.
- 89 Leunissen 1989, 382.
- 90 See CIL VI 1630 (Rome). See Devijver 1976, 733, S 32.
- 91 See AE 1929, 158; Devijver 1976, 711f., R 20. Crispinus was, as a senator, *IV vir viarum curandarum, quaestor urbanus, aedilis cerialis, praetor* (c. AD 218), *curator* of two towns in Italy, *curator viarum Clodiae Cassiae Ciminiae, iuridicus Aemiliae et Liguriae, sodalis Marcianus Antoninianus Commodianus Helvianus Severianus Antoninianus, legatus legionis XV Apollinaris* (Cappadocia), governor of Lusitania (c. 225), Thrace (c. 227), Syria Phoenice (229–33), and Achaia, *consul suffectus* (c. 234–5), and then *dux* in the war against Maximinus Thrax (238, at Aquileia). Subsequently he was governor of Hispania Citerior and Gallaecia (238–41), *curator* of Italian towns again, and *legatus Augusti pro praetore ad census acceptandos provinciae Lugdunensis*.
- 92 See Herrmann 1997, 111–23; Millar 1999, 90–108; Mennen 2011, 153.

- 93 Devijver 1976, 441f., I 32. More examples of militarily, administratively, and juridically experienced knights who became senators and continued their careers within the senatorial *cursus*, from the level of former aediles, tribunes of the *plebs* or of ex-praetors, are mentioned by Paul Leunissen, in his paragraph on *novi homines*. See Leunissen 1989, 95–101.
- 94 Devijver 1976, 322f., D 8. On the album of Canusium (AD 223) see CIL IX 338 = ILS 6121, and Salway 2000, 115–71.
- 95 Dobson 1978, 291f., nr. 188. He remarks that Triccianus, before becoming *vir clarissimus*, had not even fulfilled one of the important equestrian prefectures. On Aelius Triccianus see Faure 2013, II, 704–6, nr. 188.
- 96 Dobson 1978, 281f., nr. 172; Faure 2013, II, 571–4, nr. 53. Marcus Oclatinus Adventus had started his career as a *speculator* (scout) of a governor, and had been *frumentarius*, *centurio frumentariorum*, *princeps peregrinorum* (an important function in the camp of the *frumentarii* in Rome), *primus pilus* (in AD 197, 50 years old), and *procurator* in Britannia, AD 205–7. In 217 he became praetorian prefect, as a colleague to Macrinus, his future emperor. On this military man see Cassius Dio 78.14.1–4. On his career see PIR² O 9; Birley 2005, 312f.; Mennen 2011, 23, 164, 208f. On Valerius Comazon see Mennen 2011, 168: he started his career as a soldier in Thrace under Commodus, and was commander of *legio III Gallica* in Syria in 218, before he became Elagabalus' praetorian prefect. On this military upstart see Cassius Dio 80.4.1f. See Faure 2013, II 708f., nr. 191.
- 97 Schöpe 2014, 272–85.
- 98 Mennen 2011, 179.
- 99 There were substitutes for emperors (for legal matters), for provincial governors, for legionary commanders, and for urban and praetorian prefects. See Peachin 1996, 154–63. Pierre Cosme argues that there was simply a lack of suitable senators because many senatorial officers had died in combat, which is not very convincing. Additional senators could have been created. See Cosme in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 107.
- 100 On this issue I follow Mennen 2011, 138–40.
- 101 See above, ch. 2, p. 45.
- 102 See Piso 2005, 389–91.
- 103 Mennen 2011, 138f. On Timesitheus and his career see CIL XIII 1807 = ILS 1330. See PIR² F 581; Pflaum 1960, II, 811–21, nr. 317; Lorient 1975, 735–8; Devijver 1976, 391, F 99; Huttner in Johnes *et al.* 2008, I, 182 with note 193; Johnes 2008, II, 1071 PPO 4.
- 104 On Gallienus' changing appointment policies see Malcus 1969, 213–37; Pflaum 1976, 110ff.; De Blois 1976, 39–55; Christol 1982, 143–66; Brunt 1983, 66f.; Piso 2005, 396–8; Eich 2005, 341–56; Cosme 2009, 234–8; Geiger 2013, 336–41.
- 105 See Malcus 1969, 231ff.; De Blois 1976, 39f.; Kreucher 2003, 282, and Johnes in idem 2006, 128. Peter Brunt (Brunt 1983, 67) already supposed that Gallienus just accelerated a process that was going on.
- 106 See Dobson 1978, 312–13, nr. 221.
- 107 See Kreucher 2003, 202–12; Glas-Hartmann in Johnes 2008, I, 669; Mennen 2011, 140.
- 108 Malcus 1969, 223, 233f. Cf. Cosme 2009, 234–5.
- 109 See Eich 2005, 359–62 (Supraprovinziale Kommanden im dritten Jahrhundert). Cf. Cosme 2009, 236f. On the relatively wide spheres of action of *duces* and *praepositi* such as Iulius Priscus, Iulius Proculus (in a *praetentura* on the Middle Euphrates), Severianus, Pacatianus, Decius (the future emperor), Octavianus (in North Africa), Ingenius, Postumus, Aureolus, Marcianus, Marcellinus, and Probus (in the east, before he became emperor) see chapter II, pp. 64–81.
- 110 See above, pp. 65–86. See Piso 2005, 392.
- 111 See AE 1907, 4 = ILS 9006; Pflaum 1960, II, 905–23; Witschel in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 149, 165.

- 112 See above, p. 79.
- 113 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 33.17f.: *cum per Raetias legionibus praeesset*. See Simon 1980, 439f.; Hartmann in Johne *et al.* 2006, 95.
- 114 See Feissel and Gascou 1995, 66.
- 115 On Marcianus see Dobson 1978, 309f., nr. 217. He was *protector*, military tribune with the praetorian guard, *dux*, *stratelates*. See PIR I² M 204.
- 116 See above, pp. 80–5.
- 117 On equestrians in important logistical functions see Mennen 2011, 145–9.
- 118 Millar 1992, 105f.
- 119 See Kolb 2000, 159–66.
- 120 A *praepositus* charged with such specific duties was for example Rossius Vitulus, *praepositus annonae* during Septimius Severus' expedition to Rome, subsequently *procurator arcae expeditionalis* during the campaign against Pescennius Niger, and then *procurator annonae* for the war against Albinus in 196–7. See AE 1911, 7 = ILS 9015; Pflaum 1960, 593–601, nr. 224; Devijver 1976, 706f.; Mennen 2011, 146.
- 121 Eich 2005, 209f. shows that the *praefectus annonae* was first and foremost responsible for the corn-supply of Rome, not for military logistics.
- 122 A few examples: P. Aelius Marcellus was *primipilus* and then became *vir egregius* (knight) and prefect of the legions VII Claudia and I Adiutrix (Wolff in Eck 1999, 58); T. Flavius Maximus was *centurio*, *primus pilus*, and *praefectus legionis III Augustae* (Dobson 1978, 300, nr. 204, referring to CIL VIII 2624, Lambaesis); C. Sulpicius Caecilianus was *optio peregrinorum et exercitatori militum frumentariorum, nauarchus classis praetoriae Misenatium piae vindicis, centurio* in the legions III Augusta, VII Gemina, I Parthica, XVI Flavia Firma, and XIII Gemina, *praepositus reliquationi classis praetoriae Misenatium piae vindicis et thesauris dominicis et bastagis copiarum devehendandarum, primus pilus legionis XX Valeriae Victricis, and praefectus legionis III Cyrenaicae* (Dobson 1978, 301, nr. 205, referring to ILS 2764 = CIL VIII 14854 from Tuccabor, Africa). Dobson 1978, 311, nr. 219 mentions Clementius Valerius Marcellinus. He refers to CIL III 3424 = ILS 545: 'Genio imp(eratoris) P. Licinii Gallieni invicti Aug(usti) Clementius Silvius v(ir) e(gregius) a(gens) v(ices) p(raesidis) et Valerius Marcellinus praef(ectus) leg(ionis) protector Aug(usti) n(ostri) a(gens) v(ices) l(egati [legionis]) municipes ex provincia Raetia solverunt' (AD 267, Aquincum). From 277 to 280 he was governor of the province of Mauretania Tingitana (ILA 609–10). See PIR² C 1143; PLRE I, Marcellinus 23; Mennen 2011, 229. Dobson 1978, 312, nr. 220 mentions Aelius Aelianus from Pannonia Inferior, who was brought up in an army camp near Aquincum, as a son of a *custos armorum*. During Gallienus' sole reign, between 260 and 267 he was prefect of the legion II Adiutrix, *agens vices legati (legionis)*, and *protector* in Pannonia Inferior (AE 1965, 9 and CIL III 3529 from Pannonia Inferior). See PIR² A 129, PLRE I, Aelianus 10, cf. Aelianus 7 and 8. He may have been identical with the Aelius Aelianus mentioned as governor of Mauretania Caesariensis in CIL VIII 21486 = ILS 4495 and with the homonymous *procurator* of Epirus mentioned in AE 1907, 70 = AE 1915, 74 = ILS 9478. In ILS 4495 he was honored 'ob prostratam gentem Bavarum Mesegnentium praedasque omnes ac familias eorum abductas.' See Mennen 2011, 229, with notes 151 and 152.
- 123 Devijver 1976, 834–6, V 43; Mennen 2011, 194f.; Faure 2013, II, 700.
- 124 Devijver 1976, 380, F 76.
- 125 Dobson 1978, 305, nr. 214, referring to CIL III 4855 = ILS 2772.
- 126 Dobson 1978, 293, nr. 190, referring to CIL VIII 20996 = ILS 1356, AD 227, North Africa.
- 127 Devijver 1976, 832, V 39, referring to IGR II 481 = ILS 8870, Termessos.
- 128 Devijver 1976, 362 and 378f., F 36 and 72, referring to AE 1934, 230, AD 238.
- 129 Devijver 1976, 55, A 21, referring to ILS 8851 and IGR I 623. Under Valerian and Gallienus his son P. Aelius Ammonius jr became *procurator* in Dacia Apulensis (AE 1933, 13 = AE 1930, 135).

- 130 Dobson 1978, 304, nr. 212, referring to CIL VI 1645 = ILS 2773, Rome.
- 131 Dobson 1978, 267, nr. 151, referring to CIL III 1919 = ILS 2770 add., Epetium.
- 132 Devijver 1976, 400f., G 4, referring to CIL VIII 9047 = 20736 = ILS 2767, Auzia, Mauretania Caesariensis. We know of another *praepositus* of detachments of Moorish cavalry, Publius Aelius Primianus. He made a military career and was called defender of his North African fatherland. See Devijver 1976, 69f., A 53, referring to CIL VIII 9045 = ILS 2766; Dobson 1978, 308, nr.216.
- 133 Christol 1977; Dobson 1978, 313–16, nr. 223, referring to IGBulg.III 2, 1570 (with 1568 and 1569) = AE 1977, 768, Thracia; Mennen 2011, 230f.
- 134 CIL III 3228 = ILS 546, Sirmium: '[Io]vi / Monitori <p=B>ro / salute adque / incolumitate / d(omini) n(ostri) Gallieni Aug(usti) / et militum / vexill(ationum) legg(ionum) / [G]ermaniciana[r(um)] / [e]t Brittan(n)icin(arum) / [cu]m auxili(i)s / [e]arum / [3 V]italianus / [pro]tect(or?) Aug(usti) n(ostri) / [praepo]situs votum posuit.' See Keppie in Le Bohec 2000, 34.
- 135 AE 1934, 193: 'I.O.M. pro salute et incolumitate imp.caes.P.Licini Egnati Gallieni Aug. vexillationes legionum II Parthicae III Augustae sub cura Aurelii Augustiani ducis iustissimi et Cai... Fi Synforiani praepositi vexillationum,' Lychnidus, Serbia.
- 136 Devijver 1976, 384f., F 84, referring to RIB 2042 = AE 1936,86.
- 137 Dobson 1978, 305, nr. 213, referring to AE 1956, 10 + 1968, 189.
- 138 Under Marcus Aurelius there was, for example, Marcus Valerius Lollianus, who after his *tres militiae* became *praepositus* of a number of *vexillationes* in Mesopotamia. See Devijver 1976, 816f., V 17, referring to CIL III 600 = ILS 2724 = AE 1997, 1352, Gradista, Macedonia.
- 139 On centurions becoming *praepositi* see AE 1926, 145 = AE 1934, 163 = AE 1979, 676 = AE 1992, 1850 (reign of Septimius Severus, Numidia): *M(arcus) Ulpius Optatu[s] |(centurio) leg(ionis) III Aug(ustae) prae|/[posit]us n(umeri) Hemesenoru[m];* CIL VIII 2496 = AE 1933, 45, Numidia: *C(aius) Iul(ius) Ael[ur]io] / [(centurio) leg(ionis) III A]ug(ustae) / praep(ositus) n(umeri) Heme[senorum];* IRT 920: *Tullius Ro[mulus] c(enturio) ex ma[fi]oriario prae/[posit]us ve/[xillationis];* AE 1948, 212, Egypt, reign of Elagabalus: *M(arcus) Aur(elius) Gordianus |(centurio) / pr(a)ep(ositus) vex(illationis) leg(ionis) III Aug(ustae);* AE 1972, 677, Tripolitania: *consecrauit M[3]us Felixs(!) |(centurio) [leg(ionis) III Aug(ustae)] / P(iae) V(indicis) Severiana[e] p(rae)p(ositus) vex(illationis) / per vexillationem leg(ionis) III [Aug(ustae)] / et numerum conlatum faciendum cur(avit);* CIL VIII 3 = IRT 895 (Tripolitania): a centurion of the legion III Augusta who becomes *praepositus* of a detachment of the same legion, which is placed somewhere else; CCID 39 (Middle Euphrates region, Dura-Europos): *Ael(ius) A[vitus] |(centurio) le[g]ionis praep(ositus) / hibern[is coh(ortis) X]P[alm(yrenorum)];* AE 1967, 410 = AE 1971, 386, Dacia: *U]lp(ius) Max[i]minus |(centurio) / leg(ionis) V M[ac(edonicae)] / Gord(ianae) p(raepositus) n(umeri) / s(ingulariorum) p(editum) B(ritannicorum);* AE 1996, 1358 = AE 1999, 1349, Cherson: *Imp(eratore) d(omino) n(ostro) [[Traiano]] / [[Decio Aug(usto)]] I et Vettio / Grato co(n)s(ulibus) M(arcus) Ratin(ius) M(arci) f(ilius) P() / Saturninus |(centurio) leg(ionis) I Ital(icae) / [[Decianae]] praepositus / vexillat(ionis) Chersoniss(itanae) / scholam principalium / a solo labsa(!) de suo / aedificavit.* Third-century *praepositi vexillationis* are also mentioned in AE 1950, 126 = AE 1954, 193, Tripolitania, under Septimius Severus; AE 1993, 422 = AE 1995, 255 = AE 1996, 327, Albanum, Latium, and Campania (Italy, regio I), under Septimius Severus; AE 1947, 132 = RIB 587, Britain, under Severus Alexander; AE 2000, 1274, Crete and Cyrene; AE 2004, 1278, Moesia Inferior; AE 2004, 1287; CIL XIV 14 (p 612), Ostia; AE 1958, 55, Gallia Lugdunensis; RIB 576, Manchester, Britain; AE 1980, 960, Lambaesis, Numidia, under Carinus and Numerianus.
- 140 See Heil in Johne 2008, II, 757f.; Mennen 2011, 140.
- 141 Salway in Kolb 2006, 133f.; De Blois in idem 2001c, 148f.
- 142 See ch. 2, p. 64.
- 143 Mennen 2011, 194–209.

- 144 Mennen 2011, 222–37.
- 145 See Werner Eck's contribution to the discussion about the emperors' *amici, comites*, and *consilarii* in Kolb 2006, 67–77.
- 146 Period of Septimius Severus. See Devijver 1976, 805f., U 20, referring to CIL III 1464 = ILS 1370. Ulpius Victor was *praefectus cohortis VII Breucorum* (Pannonia Inferior, Lugio), *praepositus vexillationum auxiliariorum* (Pannonia Inferior, AD 200–5), *tribunus militum legionis II Parthicae Antoninanae*, *procurator sexagenarius ad bona Plautiani* (after AD 205), *procurator sexagenarius stationis privatae per Tusciam et Picenum*, *praepositus legionis VII Geminae* in Spain, *praefectus annonae sacrae urbis* (Rome), *procurator centenarius provinciae (Daciae) Porolis-sensis*, and *procurator Augusti provinciae Daciae Apulensis*, where he was a substitute governor, *agens vices praesidis*.
- 147 Dobson 1978, 293, nr. 190, referring to CIL VIII 20996 = ILS 1356, AD 227. The *ius gladii* is the right to order the execution of Roman citizens.
- 148 On Timesitheus' career see CIL XIII 1807 = ILS 1330. See PIR² F 581.
- 149 On Clodianus' career see Devijver 1976, 785f., T 24, referring to CIL VIII 8328, AE 1912, 132, AE 1941, 175, Cuicul and CIL 8329, AE 1918, 85, Lambaesis.
- 150 Eich 2005, 342–4.
- 151 He was a *quattuorvir viarum curandarum* (under Marcus Aurelius), *tribunus militum laticlavii* in two legions (XXII Primigenia and III Italica, 178–80), *quaestor (urbanus?)*, *tribunus plebis candidatus*, *adlectus inter praetorios*, *curator viae Latinae* (c. 190), *curator rei publicae Faventinorum* in North Italy, *legatus legionis I Italicae* (c. 193), *dux exercitus Mysiaci* (Moesiaci) *apud Byzantium* (193–6, during the famous siege of AD 193–5, see pp. 40f.), *dux exercitus Mysiaci apud Lugdunum* (197), *legatus Augustorum pro praetore Belgicae* (197?–199), *consul suffectus* (c. 199–200), *legatus Augg.pr.pr. Germaniae Inferioris*, *legatus Augg. pr.pr. Syriae Coelis* (?) (205?–208), *proconsul Africae* (either 213/214 or 216/217), *proconsul Asiae II* (214–16 or 213–15), *praefectus urbi* (218–19), and *consul II ordinarius* in 223 with L. Roscius Aelianus Paculus Salvius Iulianus. See PIR² M 308; Leunissen 1989, 382; Mennen 2011, 109.
- 152 Lorient 1975, 704; Leunissen 1989, 358, referring to Eck 1985, 238f. nr. 5; Mennen 2011, 24, 258, 260, 262.
- 153 See Birley 1998, 57–73. Perhaps we should also mention Quintus Hedius Rufus Lollianus Gentianus, *comes* of Septimius Severus in three campaigns from 194 to 197. See PIR² H 42; Mennen 2011, 106.
- 154 On Pompey's and Caesar's staff respectively see Gruen 1995, 63ff. and 115ff. See De Blois in Erdkamp 2007, 164–79; idem in Blösel and Hölkeskamp 2011, 81–92.
- 155 On *protectores* see Christol 1977, 394–408; Dobson 1978, 309–16; Cosme 2009, 234; Mennen 2011, 227–31. See above, ch. 2, p. 81.
- 156 Leunissen 1989, 41.
- 157 See Peachin 1996, 112–14, 123–7, 129–32. On the Caesonii see Mennen 2011, 91–3.
- 158 On the tasks and growing numbers of *curatores rei publicae*, especially in Italy, from Marcus Aurelius to Severus Alexander see Eck 1979, 190–246. His impression is that this development went on beyond Severus Alexander's reign. See also Papi 2004, 62f. On patricians as *curatores rei publicae* see Jacques 1984, 33ff., 39, 42, 93.
- 159 Andermahr 1998, 43–60.
- 160 Chavarria Arnau in Christie 2004, 87, referring to Vera 1992–1993, 291–339; Vera 1995a, 189–212, 1995b, 331–56, and Vera's contribution to a volume edited by Michel Christol (Christol *et al.* 1992, 165–90). François Jacques accepts a concentration of landed property in the Iberian peninsula as one of the effects of the Severan terror that followed Albinus' defeat in AD 197. See Jacques 1990, 895.
- 161 See Thoneman 2007, 475–6 (size of properties and farms in the Maeander Valley in Asia Minor in the early fourth century AD).

- 162 Christol 2006b, 1851, speaks of 'alliances familiales.' See *ibidem* 1851–9.
- 163 See Talbert 1984, 41. On the *sacrae litterae* of Septimius Severus see Drew-Bear *et al.* 1977, 355–83.
- 164 Drew-Bear *et al.* 1977, 365–81.
- 165 *Caesares* 37.5–7.
- 166 Andermahr 1998, 123.
- 167 Wojciech in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 172–91. Cf. Schöpe 2014, 305–15.
- 168 See Leunissen 1989, 84–9: from 180 to 235 Italy, North Africa and Asia Minor were the main areas from which were recruited consular senators who belonged to the powerful nucleus of the senate. About North Africa see also Christol 2006b, 1860–8.
- 169 See Leunissen 1989, 213–29 (Africa and Asia); Heil in Johnes 2008, II, 726f.; Gerhardt and Hartmann in Johnes 2008, II, 1078–189 (Provinzialfasten), esp. Africa, pp. 1090–5, and Asia Minor, pp. 1102–8, 1111–14, 1122f., 1132–6, 1164–72.
- 170 See Burnand II 2006, II, 539, 613 (not many senators from the provinces of Gaul).
- 171 On T. Sennius Sollelennis see CIL XIII 3162 (the 'Marbre de Thorigny'); Pflaum 1948, 5–28; Wolff in Eck 1999, 54; Burnand 2006, II, 557–62, nr. 255 E 198. He was a very important local notable. In 238 he was honored by the *consilium* of the Gauls, and he stood in contact with quite a few high Roman officials (Wolff in Eck 1999, 54: for example with Ti. Claudius Paulinus, PIR² C 955, and with M. Aedinius Iulianus, PIR² A 113, under Macrinus and Elagabalus). Eventually Sollelennis became a military tribune. One of the Roman governors he was in contact with was Tiberius Claudius Paulinus, who in 220 had been governor of Lower Britain (Birley, A.R. 2005, 342ff.).
- 172 In comparison: on the effects of Septimius Severus' confiscations on the Iberian Peninsula see Remesal Rodríguez 1986, 104–8; Jacques 1990, 865–99 (victims of Severan terror in the Iberian Peninsula).
- 173 Herodian 7.7.1–4; Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 26.7; HA *Maximini duo* 14–15. See Lorient 1975, 696–700; Haegemans 2010, 153–8, 185–95. Good, patronal relations with high-status senators and other important men at court, for example members the *consilium principis*, were deliberately sought by Italian communities, for example by Canusium. See ILS 6121 = CIL IX 338, AD 223, with Mouritsen 1998, 230 and Salway 2000, 160–71.
- 174 Eutropius 9.7; Orosius 7.22.7. Cf. Zosimus 1.37.2: Gallienus being north of the Alps, fighting Germans, the senate had no other option than arming troops that happened to be in Rome, and raising an emergency militia. This combined force kept the barbarians from Rome, but roving bands continued pillaging Italy.
- 175 See Zosimus 1.37.2. Cf. Eutropius 9.8.2. This was not the column that was stopped at Ravenna. See above, ch. 2, p. 79.
- 176 Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 33.31: 'At senatus comperto tali exitio satellites propinquosque per scalas Gemonias praeceps agendos decrevit, patronoque fisci in curiam perducto effossos oculos pendisse satis constat.'
- 177 See Aurelius Victor, *Caesares* 35.6; Epitome 35.4; Eutropius 9.14; HA Aurelianus 38.1f. See Watson 1999, 52f.; Hartmann in Johnes 2008, I, 313f.
- 178 On Papinian's career see PIR² A 388; Howe 1942, 71 nr. 22; Pflaum 1960–1961, II, 583–4, nr. 220; Kunkel 1967, 224–9, nr. 56; Liebs 2010, 52, and Mennen 2011, 151 with note 65. On Ulpian and his career see Pflaum 1960–1961, II, 762–5, nr. 294; Kunkel 1967, 245–54, nr. 68; Criffo 1976, 708–89; Syme 1979, 794–801; Honoré 2002, 7–35; Liebs 2010, 56, 63–4, 69–70, and Mennen 2011, 151.
- 179 See De Blois 2001b, 136–53; *idem* in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 225–37. See above, ch. 2, pp. 52, 61, 97n18.
- 180 See De Blois 1984, 358–77, esp. 376f.; *idem* 1997, 2660–75; *idem* 1998, 3411f.
- 181 Mennen 2011, 249f.

- 182 Quintus Maecius Laetus, for example, a close supporter of Septimius Severus, after having been *praepositus* of *vexillationes* from the praetorian guard, procurator, and prefect of Egypt, became senator, consul for the second time (probably in AD 215), *XV vir sacris faciundis* (an priesthood reserved for senators), *curator*, and *dux*. See CIL VI 41185 = CIL VI 1640 (p. 3163) = CIL VI 31835; Mennen 2011, 264. After a long military career Gallienus' companion, the *eques* Volusianus, one of the emperor's *protectores*, became praetorian prefect after Valerian's downfall, and ultimately senator and city prefect of Rome. See Devijver 1976, 639–41, P 30, L. Petronius Taurus Volusianus, referring to CIL XI 1836 = ILS 1332, Arretium. See also Mennen 2011, 227–9.
- 183 *Vita Apollonii* 5.36.
- 184 See Eich 2005, 356–9, on provincial *officia* becoming more homogeneous and more like real offices in the second half of the third century.
- 185 See Tacoma 2005.
- 186 De Blois in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 30f.
- 187 See about problems with liturgies P.Oxy. 4437 (c. 229–36 or 237); SB XVI 13050 (236); SB XX 15170 (238–44); P.Leit. 16 (cf. P.Leit.4–9 and 13); P. Oxy. 2854 (248); P. Erl. 18 (248); P.Lond.inv. 2565 (SB 7696) (250). On problems regarding tax collection and payment of taxes see P.Oxy. 890 (3rd cent., probably 234–8); P. Wisc. II 86 (244–6). Many farmers were taxed for land that they did not till nor possess. See above all P. Mich. IX 529. Edicts of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, by which they tried to prevent the pushing off of burdens to *georgoi* and the attribution of liturgies simultaneously or without pause to one person, were often quoted or cited in papyrus texts. See P. Oxy. 1405, 3105, 4437; P.Flor. III 382; PSI I 807 (280); P.Mich. IX 529 (on ll. 93–106 of this text see T.C. Skeat and E.P. Wegener, *JEA* 21 [1935], 237). Cf. *Dig.* 50.1.18 (Paul). See Lewis 1975, 202–6.
- 188 Adams in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 284ff.
- 189 See Hauken 1998, 2–28, 29–34, 35–57, 140–61, 215f., 217–43. Cf Mitchell 1976, 114f.; Millar 1992, 646 (SEG 37 [1987], 1186). See Eich 2005, 294ff. (on the *tractus Karthaginiensis*); 297ff. (on the administration of imperial domains in Asia Minor).
- 190 *Dig.* 50.6.6.11 (Callistratus) *coloni quoque caesaris a muneribus liberantur et idoneiores praediis fiscalibus habeantur* (the coloni of caesar are also freed from munera, so that they may be more suitable for the cultivation of the estates of the imperial treasury).
- 191 See above, p. 197.
- 192 See P. Fay. 20 = SB XIV 11648 = Hunt and Edgar, *Select Papyri* II, 1956, nr. 216 (June 24, AD 222). See Oliver 1978, 474–85. On the *aurum coronarium* see P. Oxy. 1522 (last year of Elagabalus, a list); BGU XV 2508 (222–35); PSI 733 (235). See Bowman 1967, 59–74.
- 193 P.Lond.inv. 2565 (SB 7696) (AD 250).
- 194 See Hauken 1998, 35 ff., esp. 41, on a text from Aga Bey Köyü (Lydia) dating from 197–211 or 244–9, 149, on the petition from Aragua in Phrygia; 173 on a text from Dagis in Moesia Inferior, from AD 159–60, a parallel text from an earlier period. On the text from Aga Bey Köyü see also Eich 2005, 121, 299–307.
- 195 Mitchell 2001, 1, 235, 238; Mecella 2006, 241–66; Potter 2008, 161.
- 196 Millar 1969, 29. Cf. Witschel 2004, 271. Examples are given by Mitchell 2001, 213–17 (Asia Minor); Kreucher 2003, 143f. (Gaul, esp. from 275 onwards); Piso 2005, 56 (Romula in Dacia, under Philip); Sartre 2005, 272f. (Syria, e.g. Bostra and Adraha); Nollé in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 279f. (mainly Asia Minor). And of course Aurelian's wall around Rome, and the famous, still visible wall surrounding the Athenian Acropolis. See above, ch. 2, p. 84, and p. 89.
- 197 See Dexippus, frg.23 and 24 Martin. See above, p. 68.

- 198 AE 1928, 38, dedicated by *iuvenes, ob pulsum moenibus hostem*.
- 199 Zonaras 12.23.
- 200 See above, ch. 2, pp. 73, 82.
- 201 Zosimus 1.29.3; Zonaras 12.23.
- 202 Mitchell 2001, 233f.
- 203 Cf. Syncellus 467.
- 204 See above, ch. 2, pp. 84–87.
- 205 Millar 1969, 28f.
- 206 A Roman officer who is pointed out as helper of his own region is P. Aelius Primianus; see Devijver 1976, 69f., A 53, referring to PIR I² 39, nr. 233, and CIL VIII 9045 = ILS 2766, Auzia, Mauretania Caesariensis, AD 255. See also Dobson 1978, 308, nr. 216. He was *decurio alae II Thracum* (Maur.Caes.), *tribunus cohortis IV Sygambrorum, a militiis, primus pilus, tribunus cohortis IV vigilum, praepositus vexillationis equitum Maurorum*, and *decurio III coloniarum Auziensis et Rusguniensis et Equizetensis*, and is called *defensor provinciae suae*.
- 207 See Davenport and Mallan 2013, 57–73, on Decius' letter to Philippopolis. See also Mecella 2006, 263.
- 208 IGR III 481 = ILS 8870, Termessos, Pisidia. See Mitchell 2001, 234.
- 209 HA *Gallienus* 13.6: Gallienus deputed Cleodamus and Athenaeus the Byzantines to repair and fortify the cities and a battle was fought near the Black Sea, in which the barbarians were conquered by the Byzantine leaders. See ch. 2, p. 84.
- 210 Arrian, *Periplus* 11.2; Lucian, *Alexander* 48. See Palm 1959, 54f.; De Blois 1998, 3404.
- 211 See Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 1.20 and 37; 5.7; *Vitae Sophistarum* 616.
- 212 See Flinterman 1995, 119f. with note 141.
- 213 Eck 1979, 227. The tasks of those curators can be reconstructed on the basis of evidence from Asia Minor, where such *curatores* operated as well (idem 1979, 216). On town curators in Asia Minor see Burton 1979, 465–87. Curators are mentioned in *Dig.* 50.4.18.9 (curators who are regularly chosen to collect the public revenues of the various communities); 50.8.2.1 (a curator cannot exploit *praedia publica*); 50.8.2.6 (the *curator rei publicae* may order restitution to be made to an owner of the value of grain removed wrongfully after a purchase which is made for the public account); 50.8.5 (a curator could lease out public land of a local community), and 50.8.6.2 (a rich local citizen was eventually allowed to become a curator). The jurist Ulpian wrote a book entitled *De officio curatoris rei publicae* (*Dig.* 50.9.4). Apparently this function had become sufficiently important to write a book about it.
- 214 See Burton 1979, 465–87 (Asia Minor) and Cordovana 2007, 201, referring to ILAf 130f. (about a *curator* in Africa, at Sufetula). A town curator is mentioned by L. and J. Robert 1954 (*La Carie* II), 318, nr. 169, rule of Severus Alexander. He is the sophist Antiochus (Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistarum* II 4, 5.4 en 7) from Aigeai, and acts as *curator rei publicae*. He was appointed by the emperor.
- 215 On Italy, Africa, Asia Minor, and the turmoil of third-century warfare see above, pp. 140–53, and 155–8.
- 216 Burton 1979, 465–87, esp. 482f.
- 217 Ti. Claudius Subatianus, AE 1911, 107 = ILS 9488; CIL VIII 4323 (cp. 18528). See Devijver 1976, 272f., C 187; Leunissen 1989, 383.
- 218 See Devijver 1976, 251, C 142, referring to IG XII.3.1119 from Melos, Asia, and PIR II² 204 n.876. On the imperial cult see ch. 1, p. 4.
- 219 See Devijver 1976, 555, M 12, referring to CIL X 7946 = ILS 5526.
- 220 Of course we are speaking of local notables having Roman citizenship.
- 221 See Devijver 1991, 130–201, esp. 132, where he says: 'The recruiting base of the equestrian order, and therefore of the *militiae equestres* as well, was the municipal elite of *decuriones* and *bouleutai*.' A better way to put it would have been: 'an

important recruiting base' instead of 'the recruiting base' of the *militia equestres*. Local élites had never been the only recruiting ground of equestrian officers. See below, pp. 206f.

- 222 See Devijver 1976, 67, A 47, P. Aelius Maximus, an officer who had done his three *militiae* and was *decurio* at Napoca and a priest of the imperial cult of the three provinces in Dacia; 69f., A 53, P. Aelius Primianus, a Roman officer who is pointed out as helper of his own region in North Africa (AD 255, Auzia, Mauretania Caesariensis, see also Dobson 1978, 308, nr. 216); 106f., A 132, T. Antonius Alfenus Arignotus, a trusted officer of Marcus Aurelius, Severus, and Caracalla who was honored by Cyzicus; 145f., A 217, T. Aurelius Calpurnianus Apollonides (time of Septimius Severus), an equestrian officer from Nicaea; 150f., A 230, M. Aurelius Hermogenes who was *patronus coloniae* and priest of the Genius of the town at Ostia; 160, A 255, Aurelius Serapio, officer in the fleet of Misenum who was *adlectus in ordinem decurionum* of that place; 191, C 7, L. Caecilius Athenaeus who had been *duumvir* at Sufetula in Africa; 244–6, C 128, Ti. Claudius Candidus, Severus' general, who became *curator* of Nicomedia and Ephesus; 246, C 129, Ti. Claudius Charidemus Philometor, at the end of the second century AD asiarch and military tribune; 251, C 142, Ti. Claudius Frontonianus, a Greek intellectual who had been two times high priest of the imperial cult in Asia; 258f., C 158, Ti. Claudius Priscus Rufinus, an officer who was a patron of Volturnum; 276f., C 194, Ti. Claudius Zeno Ulpianus, an officer who became patron of Pisaurum; 272f. C 187, Ti. Claudius Subatianus Proculus, an officer who became *curator* of Athens and Patras; 370, F 55, Flavius Longus (Samosata); 330, F 22, T. Domitius Heron (Nicomedia), 400f., G 4, Q. Gargilius Martialis (CIL VIII 9047 = 20736 = ILS 2767, Auzia, Mauretania Caesariensis, an equestrian officer who had been a *decurio duarum coloniarum*); 545f., L 48, Lollianus, an equestrian officer who pursued a procuratorial career and probably came from Bononia; 555, M 12, L. Magnus Fulvianus, a military tribune who was a *curator rei publicae* at Turris Libisonis, Sardinia; 636, P 25, Q. Petronius Melior, an officer and procurator who had done local *honores* at Faesulae and Florence in Italy and among the 15 communities of Etruria, and had been *curator* of the *res publica Saenesium*; 672f., P 95, T. Porcius Cornelianus (IGR I 10 = ILS 8852, Massilia, equestrian *militiae* early third century); Dobson 1978, 269f., nr. 154, Cn. Marcius Rustius Rufinus (CIL IX 1582 = ILS 1343, Beneventum; CIL X 1127, Abellinum; CIL XIV 4389, Ostia), a trusted officer of Septimius Severus, coming from a family of landed proprietors at Beneventum in Italy; Pflaum 1960, II, 263, 705–6 and Dobson 1978, 283, nr. 173, P. Vibius Marianus (CIL VI 1636 = ILS 1361, Rome, under Septimius Severus, from Iulia Dertona in Italy. His daughter was *clarissima*); Dobson 1978, 284f., nr. 176, C. Didius Saturninus, an officer decorated by Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, and by Septimius Severus and Caracalla (evidence coming from Italy, CIL XI 7264 = ILS 9194; he is honored by the citizens of Saturnia as their patron); Dobson 1978, 285, nr. 177, M. Tillius Rufus (CIL X 5064 = ILS 2667, Atina, AD 208, likewise a patron of a *municipium*); Dobson 1978, 287, nr. 180, C. Cornelius Egrilianus from Theveste in North Africa (CIL III 103 + CIL VIII 1858 = ILS 13041); Dobson 1978, 288, nr. 182 and Burnand II 2006, 532, nr. 239 E 182 (cf. Panzram 2002, 289), C. Titius Similis (CIL II 484 = ILS 1372, Emerita, Spain), apparently a man from Cologne. He was a *curator* at Emerita; Dobson 1978, 295, nr. 191, T. Aurelius Flavinus, a decorated officer of Severan times (Caracalla), and a former *princeps ordinis* of the *colonia Oescus* and *buleutes civitatum Tyrannorum, Dionysopolis, Marcianopolis, Tungrorum et Aquincensium* (CIL III 14416 = ILS 7178, AE 1961, 208); Dobson 1978, 301, nr. 205, C. Sulgius Caecilianus, a military man with a long career (ILS 2764 = CIL VIII 14854, Tuccabor, North Africa, of which he was a patron); Dobson 1978, 318f., nr. 226, P. Aelius Marcellus (CIL XI 5215 = ILS 2650, Fulginiae, cf. CIL III 7795,

- 1181f., c. AD 230–40), an officer who had been a local priest and was a patron of three towns; Wolff in Eck 1999, 58 mentions someone who was a *patronus* of communities in Umbria, but also of Apulum in Dacia.
- 223 CIL XIII 1680 = ILS 1390. See also CIL VII 167 = RIB 450 (Flavius Longus domo Samosata); CIL VII 317 = RIB 917 (T. Domitius Heron domo Nicomedia); Devijver 1976, 639, p. 28 (Q. Petronius Quintianus domo Nicomedia). Domo Samosata means that he is from that place.
- 224 Wolff in Eck 1999, 55. On this petition see CIL III 12336 = Sylloge³ II 888 = IGR I 674 = FIRA² 507–9, nr. 106. See Herrmann 1990, 18–27, nr. 4; Hauken 1998, 74–137.
- 225 CIL III 14191 = OGIS II 519 = IGR IV 598. See Herrmann 1990, 28–33; Hauken 1998, 140–61.
- 226 Birley, E. 1988b, 189–205, esp. 204.
- 227 See Dobson 1978, 281f., nr. 172. Marcus Oclatinus Adventus had started his career as a *speculator* (scout) of a governor, and had been *frumentarius*, *centurio frumentariorum*, *princeps peregrinorum* (an important function in the camp of the *frumentarii* in Rome), *primus pilus* (in AD 197, fifty years old), and *procurator* in Britannia, AD 205–7. In 217 he became praetorian prefect, as a colleague to Macrinus, his future emperor. On this military man see PIR² O 9; Birley 2005, 312f.; Mennen 2011, 23, 164, 167, 208f. On Comazon see Mennen 2011, 168: he started his career as a soldier in Thrace under Commodus, and was commander of *legio III Gallica* in Syria in 218, before he became Elagabalus' praetorian prefect. On Maximinus' career see HA *Maximini duo* 1–6. See Haegemans 2010, 47, 49–56.
- 228 See Dobson 1978, 312, nr. 220, Aelius Aelianus, referring to CIL III 3529, AE 1965, 9, CIL VIII 21486 = ILS 4495. See above, pp. 73, 181.
- 229 See Dobson 1978, 313–16, nr. 223. See above, p. 181, 193.
- 230 See above, p. 199.
- 231 See Friesen in Koester 1995, 244 (the entire article: pp. 229–45). *Neokoros* denoted a city having on its territory a temple of the imperial cult with concomitant tasks, festivals and privileges.
- 232 Horster in De Blois *et al.* 2006, 204ff.
- 233 Gradel 2002, 355–62. On the decay of the traditional imperial cult in Spain after 235 see Richardson 1998, 251f.
- 234 On the imperial domains see ch. 3, pp. 155–8.
- 235 Herodian 2.4.7: 'Pertinax also gave orders that his name should not be inscribed on imperial property on the grounds that it did not belong to the private estate of the emperor but to the general public treasury of the Roman empire.'
- 236 See Adams in Swain and Edwards 2004, 84.
- 237 Eich 2005, 178–88.
- 238 See Peachin 1996, 154–8 (deputies for provincial governors, praetorian prefects, and urban prefects); 158–63 (deputies for the emperor). See his prosopography, pp. 92–153, for *iudices vice caesaris* known to us.
- 239 See above, ch. 1, pp. 4–5. See Weaver 1972, 244–66. On the *a rationibus* and his office see Eich 2005, 159–79. On rules in the administrative careers of freedmen see Eck 2002, 145–9. On the administration of mines and quarries see Domergue 2008, 197–204. Eck points out that there were regular patterns of promotion among freedmen procurators. Freedmen procurators who were deputies of financial procurators, for example, were mostly taken from the bureaux in Rome, particularly from the office of the *a rationibus*.
- 240 See Weaver 1972, 267–81; Eich 2005, 288–337.
- 241 Eich 2005, 356–9. Cf. idem in Benoist 2012, 104–7.
- 242 Haensch in Kolb 2006, 153–64. Cf. Schöpe 2014, 337–42. Haensch in Kolb 2006, 163 says: 'Wie andere Mitglieder der römischen Verwaltung entwickelten die *tabularii* und ähnliche *officiales* im 3.Jh. eine zunehmende Unabhängigkeit. Vielleicht

- mussten sie sogar in dieser Zeit des immer grösser werdenden Chaos zunehmend autonom agieren. Das betraf aber nicht nur ihre Aufgaben, sondern auch ihren Personenstatus.'
- 243 See Cyprian, Epistle 80.1.
- 244 Von Domaszewski 1967, 106ff.; Birley, E. 1988b, 189–205 and 206–20; Campbell 1984, 431–5 (on the judicial role of centurions); Dobson 1974, 432; Breeze and Dobson 1993, 392–434 (on the great significance of *primi pili* and *primipilarii*); Alston 1995, 86–96 (centurions in Roman Egypt); Pollard 2000, 91–6 (centurions in Roman Syria); Faure 2013, I, 25–156 ('Le métier de centurion sous les Sévères').
- 245 See Faure 2013, I, 104f.
- 246 See Cassius Dio 55.2.1 (centurions and military tribunes carry Drusus' corpse to Rome), and 56.42.3 (centurions light the pyre at Augustus' funeral).
- 247 See Cassius Dio 52.19–22; 52.24–26; 52.27; 52.30–32; 52.37. See De Blois 1998, 3409.
- 248 See for example P. Euphr. 2 and 5. See Feissel and Gascoü 1995, 113f. See Faure 2013, I, 104–56.
- 249 Speidel, M.P. 1984, 185–8. A *centurio regionarius* is mentioned in P. Euphr. 2, 12f. See Feissel and Gascoü 1995, 113. Mitchell in Eck 1999, 29f., speaks of *regionarii* in substantial rural territories not dominated by urban centers.
- 250 Dobson 1978, 67–87. Under the Severans there still was a strong continuity with the preceding Antonine period: see Faure 2013, I, 102f.
- 251 Birley, E. 1988b, 189–205, esp. 204. To give a few examples of local notables and knights who directly became centurions: Dobson 1978, 269f., nr. 154, Cn. Marcius Rustius Rufinus, *centurio ex equite Romano*. He was an *eques* and local proprietor at Beneventum who had gone into the army as a centurion, in the east, with the Fifteenth Legion Apollinaris (early Severan period); Dobson 1978, 283, nr. 173, P. Vibius Marianus from Dertona (under Septimius Severus); Dobson 1978, 318f., nr. 226, P. Aelius Marcellus, Fulginiae, c. 230–40; Devijver 1976, 639–41, P 30, L. Petronius Taurus Volusianus, Arretium, one of Gallienus' comrades, ex V decuriis, *equo publico*, *centurio deputatus*; Burnand II 2006, 530f., 238 E 181, C. Suiccius La[tinus], St. Quentin, civitas Viromanduorum, Belgica, who was a *sacerdos Romae et Augusti* who became *primus pilus*. It is logical to suppose that he had been centurion first.
- 252 On *beneficarii* and their tasks see Ott 1995, 163–6; Nélis-Clément 2000, 59–289; idem in Kolb 2006, 269–98.
- 253 Nélis-Clément in Kolb 2006, 269–98.
- 254 See Speidel, M.A., in Kolb 2014, 80–99, esp. 91.
- 255 Ott 1995, 163.
- 256 See Ott 1995, 213–37, giving the maps that show the development of *stationes* over the empire. See also pp. 90–100 and 163–6. The system of *stationes* at strategic points in the provinces began under Trajan, and came to full development under the Antonines. At the start of the third century there may have been 129 *stationes* in the Rhine-Danube region, and 29 in the east and North Africa. There were many in the north of Britain (map 1), there were a few behind the *limes* in Germania Inferior (map 2), many in the northern parts of the Agri Decumates (map 3), just one in Raetia, but more in Noricum (map 4), quite a few in Pannonia and Dalmatia (behind the *limes*, in cities, and on the Adriatic coast, maps 5 and 6), some in Dacia (at Apulum, Potaissa, and the mines), many in the Moesia (in towns, at the *limes*, and near mines, map 8), almost none in Greece and Macedon (map 9), not many either in Asia Minor, Syria, Arabia, and Palestine (maps 10 and 11), and just seven in Egypt (map 12). North Africa had many *stationes*, but not the plethora of some Rhine and Danube regions or northern Britain (map 13). In the Iberian peninsula there were *stationes* at the mines (map 14). In Italy there were very few (map 15).

- Dise 1997b, 293 concludes that at the end of the Antonine period the Rhine and Danube provinces contained more than four times the number of *stationes* found in the North African provinces and the east together. In the third century the pattern changed. Military stations were also spread over Asia Minor, for example, to regions where they had not been before. See Roueché 1981, 115 who speaks of peace-keeping becoming increasingly demanding, which necessitated the presence of contingents of soldiers at various points in the hinterland of Asia. See also Mitchell 2001, 230 and 233. On the functioning of the *stationes* see Nélis-Clément in Kolb 2006, 269–98, where she discusses the *stationes* as sites where imperial power was shown and transmitted. See idem 2000, 133ff.
- 257 Dise 1997a, 281.
- 258 See the petition against high-handedness perpetrated by *frumentarii* and *kollektiones* by villagers at Kemaliye, Philadelphia, province of Asia, probably under Septimius Severus (Hauken 1998, 58ff.). See also the petition by farmers of an imperial domain at Aga Bey Köyü (time of Septimius Severus or Philip the Arabian). See Rostovtzeff 1957, 652f., note 1, and 713, note 16; Herrmann 1990, 34–7; Hauken 1998, 35–43; Mitchell in Eck 1999, 44; Eich 2005, 299. See Hauken 1998, 162–8, petition by villagers near Kavacik, Lydia, AD 247–8. A few words are recognizable: *frumentarii*, *kollektiones*, *praetoriani*, *enochlesis*, *eispraxis*. This text was inscribed on a grand monument.
- 259 On *frumentarii* see Clauss 1973, 82–122; Rankov 1990, 176–82, and Kolb 2000, 290–4. Their headquarters was the *castra peregrina* at Rome. From various provinces they came to that camp, to be charged with a variety of tasks. They were members both of the offices of the provincial governors and of their *castra* in Rome, in roles which were complimentary. Raising supplies, carrying despatches, facilitating contacts between Rome and the provinces, spying, and even perpetrating killings they obeyed the emperor as well as his governors.
- 260 Marcus Oclatinus Adventus had started his career as a *speculator* (scout) of a governor, and had been *frumentarius*, *centurio frumentariorum*, *princeps peregrinorum* (an important function in the camp of the *frumentarii* in Rome), *primus pilus* (in AD 197, 50 years old), and *procurator* in Britannia, AD 205–7. In 217 he became praetorian prefect, as a colleague to Macrinus, his future emperor. On this military man see Dobson 1978, 281f., nr. 172; Birley 2005, 312f.; Mennen 2011, 23, 164, 208f.; Faure 2013, II, 571–4, nr. 53.
- 261 Ott 1995, 163; Cosme 2009, 221. Cf. Speidel, M.P. 1992, 229–32.
- 262 Eich 2005, 362–4; idem in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 509–28. Cf. Haensch in Kolb 2006, 153–64, esp. 163f.
- 263 As Pierre Cosme says: ‘La nécessité de mobiliser le plus de forces possibles pour la défense de l’empire ne permettait sans doute plus d’employer alors les militaires à autre chose qu’à la guerre. La spécialisation des carrières était le terme logique de cette évolution qui aboutit à la création d’un corps de fonctionnaires civils, les *officiales*, qui remplacèrent progressivement les *principales* dans les administrations provinciales et centrales. Ils étaient souvent recrutés parmi les notables municipaux.’ See Cosme 2009, 218.
- 264 Cosme 2009, 219.

5 Ideological sources of Roman imperial power

5.1. Introduction

To maintain and preserve an empire, an imperial government does not only need an effective administration, military strength, and the means to support both of them, but also a generally accepted legitimacy and authority, in other words ideological power.¹ Roman emperors were no exception to this rule. One source of their ideological power was acceptance by the military forces, the bureaucracy, and the higher orders in society. On formal grounds the people of Rome, the *plebs urbana*, should be added, but in the third century their power and significance were limited. A very important source of ideological imperial power was a permanent potential for victory expressing itself in tangible victories. Other sources of ideological imperial power were divine associations and strong dynastic claims to the throne.

Imperial representation advertised the qualities and achievements of the emperors. As soon as imperial representation became something normal and generally known, and got the status of common knowledge, it contributed to the internalization of Roman imperial power among the inhabitants of the empire, which in its turn caused a general obedience to Roman imperial law and regulations, more effectively so than coercive power could have done. Being aware of this, second- and third-century AD mirrors of princes emphasized that sound authority is based on *eunoia*, goodwill, acceptance of imperial authority, and that sheer force and violence are the hallmark of tyrants.² Power and the representation of power were not identical. The emperors needed economic and fiscal power, a good apparatus, a strong position among their networks, and political ascendancy based on actual successes to keep the soldiers satisfied and to impress potential enemies and competitors but they needed a clever representation of power to get the message more explicitly to their armies, enemies, and competitors. The representation of imperial power added most to the emperors' actual power, if it reflected reality and did not propagate things that did not exist.

Above, in chapter 1, tools of imperial representation are described as they were about AD 200. As well as their predecessors, third-century emperors issued imperial coinage and disseminated statues, portrait busts, triumphal arches, relief works, and other works of art. They broadcast their power through outward signs and symbols of authority, titles in inscriptions on buildings and monuments,

and the language used in rescripts and other messages.³ Through these media emperors reached many people, especially powerful audiences such as the military and higher orders in society. Among the lower classes in society, however, illiteracy may have diminished the scope of propagandistic and administrative messages. Images of emperors, with concomitant inscriptions, were ubiquitous. Clifford Ando speaks of staggering numbers of images, and of a rapid diffusion of imperial imagery, which amounted to a visual language, a semantic system of imperial iconography that was universally intelligible and flexible, expressing the sacral character and power of the imperial presence.⁴ To a new emperor were awarded statues, and when an emperor had been murdered or removed through a usurpation of imperial power, statues representing him were destroyed.⁵ *Damnatio memoriae*, the obliteration of a dead predecessor's representation, was a negative way to legitimize the position of a successor.⁶ Representing themselves through statues and busts emperors conformed themselves to a common pattern. Local notables did something similar. One of the striking characteristics of the urban landscape of cities in the Roman empire was the proliferation of statues and inscriptions. Lining the streets, framing the market places, and adorning public buildings, were monuments that commemorated the deeds, names, and faces of local priests, magistrates, and benefactors, and those of their families.⁷ Impressing themselves upon subconscious levels, statues of gods, like other public imagery, even returned in dreams.⁸ In a recently published article Angelos Chaniotis makes clear how in the Greek world strong emotions were provoked by statues of gods, kings, athletes, and other human beings.⁹

Through imperial titulature the emperors could broadcast propagandistic messages. Imperial titles contained elements that emphasized dynastic, military, and religious characteristics that legitimized the power of the emperor. These elements supplemented and reinforced one another. Suitable vehicles for ideological communication were coins and coin types.¹⁰ Massive numbers of coins reached the armed forces, but also the higher orders, the most important trading cities, people who sold something to the military, builders, architects, administrators at all levels of society (private and public), people outside the empire, and all kinds of random persons within it. Coins were the representative of the emperor, whose image adorned the obverses. When Jesus in St. Matthew 22: 19–21 was speaking with the Pharisees about taxes, he took a *denarius* as a common, accessible symbol to show what belongs to the emperor, what is in the latter's power.¹¹ As Olivier Hekster, Fleur Kemmers, and Erika Manders have shown, coins sent to specific armies carried propagandistic images and texts that suited those military units well. Emperors and their assistants had a deliberate program of audience-targeting. Decisions about imperial representation on coins were taken by the emperors and their closest entourage.¹² In her book on coining images of power, Erika Manders analyzes the relative frequency of coin types. Most of them belong to the categories 'military representation,' 'divine association,' 'golden age,' and 'virtues' (personal qualities). Of all imperial coin types of the period AD 193–284, which are represented in the volumes of the *Roman Imperial Coinage*, 22.5 per cent have a military character, 21.8 per

cent of them propagate divine associations of the emperors and their relatives, 19.2 per cent promote prosperity and a new age of happiness and abundance, and 17.4 per cent glorify the virtues and qualities of the emperors and their dynasties. The remainder are spread over other categories.¹³ One prerequisite condition of general acceptance and positive propagandistic value was that coins had to be trusted. If coins were no longer generally trusted and accepted, the imperial representation they were showing would lose much of its strength. Some usurpers realized that they had to compete with ruling emperors in the beauty and quality of their coins. After 260, Postumus saw to it that he could produce coins that were better and more beautiful than those of his adversary Gallienus. He may have used experienced craftsmen from former local mints to produce his coinage.¹⁴ There is only one clear sign that people began to distrust imperial coins. In P. Oxy. 12, 1411 (AD 260), a text that was quoted above, in chapter 3, a *strategus* called Ptolemaeus or Nemesianus ordered bankers and all other persons engaged in commercial transactions to accept the new imperial coinage. They had been unwilling 'to accept the divine coins of the emperors.'¹⁵ Apparently their intrinsic quality had become too poor or the position of the emperor who had issued them had become too unstable.

As before, in the third century rescripts constituted an important medium of imperial representation. Embassies took them back to their home towns, which had sent them with their petitions to the emperor or a governor or another official. In the third century embassies may have had some trouble to find the emperors because most of them had to fight enemies in various parts of the empire, and were no longer regularly in Rome. Rescripts became widely known because an imperial answer to one community was valid to other ones too.¹⁶ Imperial rescripts were important to local communities, a means to ward off unwanted behavior by foraging soldiers or tax collectors.¹⁷ In *Dig.* 14.3.11.3 Ulpian stipulates that such public notices should be written in clear letters, posted in such a way that it might be read properly from ground level, at a frequented place.¹⁸ That emperors unavoidably disappointed these expectations, because they could no longer successfully hold in check hungry marching soldiers or collectors of taxes and supplies, was tantamount to a direct undermining of imperial authority.

In the third century the imperial cult and its shrines still were an integral part of public religion, not only in cities but also in military camps, where it constituted a strong, unavoidable training to accept imperial authority. As the *Feriale Duranum* (AD 225–227) shows, the Severan *domus divina*, female members included, had a strong position in the ritual calendar of the *Cohors XX Palmyrenorum* at Dura.¹⁹ In this list of festivals traditional Roman gods are mentioned, but also the birth-days of emperors who used to be honored in the imperial cult, *dies natales* (birth-days) of living members of the ruling dynasty, and important moments in the life of the reigning emperor, Severus Alexander in this case, such as the day he had donned the *toga virilis*, his designation as a *caesar*, his first designate consulate, the day he started to rule (*dies imperii*), and the awarding of the titles Augustus, *pater patriae* and *pontifex maximus*. Military holidays are stipulated as well, for example 7 January, the day of the first stipend and of honorable discharges of

soldiers who had reached the end of their career, and simultaneously the day of Septimius Severus' Parthian victory. No eastern deities are mentioned, though. Even at Dura, where military and civilians patronized and frequented temples and cults of eastern deities,²⁰ the military calendar focused entirely on traditional Roman gods, like all such calendars throughout the empire probably did. In votive inscriptions of individual military men, on the contrary, we see many eastern deities and eastern interpretations of Roman deities, for example Jupiter Dolichenus, Jupiter Heliopolitanus, deus Malagbelus, and the Syrian sun god.²¹

Emperors sometimes adapted their representation to changing circumstances. While Caracalla was still ruling together with his father, Septimius Severus, his portraits had the typical luxuriant Antonine hairstyle; but during his sole reign this was exchanged for a short, curly hairdo, typical for soldiers. His face got a serious expression and a frown on the forehead. In comparison to his earlier portraits, the sole ruler type was more realistic and intimidating, and probably meant to show the emperor's military prowess.²² Caracalla's coin types minted from 198 to 210 present a picture, which broadly speaking is in line with most of his father's representation.²³ From 198 to 210 the Severan *domus divina* was well represented on Caracalla's coins. The majority of Caracalla's coin types minted from 212 to 217, however, associated the emperor with the divine, in line with Cassius Dio's remark that Caracalla claimed to be the most pious of all mankind (77.16.1). All other coin types decreased in numbers and the *domus divina* types virtually disappeared, which is not strange.²⁴ Caracalla and Iulia were the sole survivors of the dynasty, without any realistic expectation of the emperor procreating himself. Another example. After the Severan period imperial portraiture changed. Portraits of the soldier-emperors who ruled after 235 switched to short-cropped hair, realistic physiognomies, and overtly expressive features, probably to express strenuous military vigor.²⁵

To be successful, imperial representation had to adapt to existing *exempla* and patterns of expectation. *Exempla* were created by emperors who had governed well and counted as models.²⁶ Patterns of expectation had existed since a long time, especially among the higher orders and the military, and had partially been shaped by two and a half centuries of imperial representation. Since the beginning of the Principate most emperors had exhibited activities that people expected them to perform; but imperial slogans, standard texts, and frequently repeated images that people met in all corners of the empire had functioned as a training in what to expect, as a school of ideology.²⁷ In this way representation and perception of imperial power were mutually reinforcing processes. Patterns of expectation depended on social status, and differed from one social group to another. Expectations differed according to class and group. Everybody expected the emperors to bring victories and prosperity, but *paideia* no doubt was particularly important to the members of the higher orders in society. The safety and wellbeing of senators in Rome looms large in the works of Cassius Dio and Herodian, but cannot have been that important to the military serving in the war zones in the north and east. Maintaining a reliable *annona*, however, was essential to Rome and to marching or fighting armies, an important feature of the

emperor's *providentia*. Local notables must have had their patterns of expectation about imperial behavior too. Protecting their local populations against overbearing soldiers and tax collectors was one of their concerns.

Patterns of expectation ran through panegyric orations, in which emperors were eulogized for their great deeds and qualities. Orators who wrote such speeches used standard language, full of commonplaces, but let shine through generally shared expectations. Such speeches contained exhortation in the form of eulogy, and may have contributed to shaping imperial behavior.²⁸ In her book on imperial power and political virtues Anne Gangloff demonstrates how important the *discours* between rulers, aristocrats, and intellectuals such as sophists and rhetors, was in forming generally shared opinions about good emperorship.²⁹

Emperors who went against all expectations soon ran into trouble. Cases in point are Elagabalus and Maximinus Thrax. Frustrating all expectations about the behavior of Roman emperors, Elagabalus put worshipping his god above all else.³⁰ Maximinus taxed landed proprietors too fiercely. Never going to Rome and the senate, he acted more like a career soldier, a military commander, than as an emperor. In the end, coming into serious logistical problems at Aquileia, he even lost his soldiers' sympathy.³¹

Emperors did not create their ideological and representational strategies on their own. They were influenced by men and women who surrounded them and whom they met on a regular basis. People who were near the emperor, in his entourage, were better able to 'negotiate' about his views and behavior than far-off persons were, even if the latter were very rich and of high status. After 260 senatorial upper class views had to retreat in the emperor's surroundings, to the advantage of hard-core military and administrative norms. The emperor Gallienus discovered that the cultural atmosphere around him had changed, when by 266/267 he wished to put a deserted place in Campania at the disposal of the neo-platonic philosopher Plotinus and his disciples. The idea was that they would have a kind of community there, a 'Platonopolis.' The generals in the emperor's entourage, however, resisted and saw such expressions of *paideia* as a superfluous pastime, good for emperors who reigned in peaceful conditions.³²

In imperial representation the city of Rome had always been important. In this city they interacted with the senate and impressed the people, particularly at the games. In Rome the emperors received embassies and proclaimed the written answers to petitions on various temple platforms, and at other central places. In Rome they participated in age-old rituals, which belonged to Roman identity. In Rome the emperors celebrated their triumphs. Triumphal processions were staged in central Rome, within the monumental showcase of Roman greatness, in which a multitude of symbols of earlier triumphs and victories had merged into a static, normative framework for new individual expressions of the permanent potential for victory that was the obligatory hallmark of any emperor, and one of the main foundations of his power. Any ruler who wanted to march through Rome along the ancient routings of triumphal processions, from the Porta Triumphalis to the Forum of Augustus or the Capitol, had to interact with and interrelate to this framework.³³

In the period lasting from 193 to 284 Roman emperors were less often present in Rome than before. In the period AD 200–250, emperors were present at Rome in 21 out of 50 years, for stays which were much shorter than in earlier times, whereas in the period AD 250–300, emperors were present in 18 out of 50 years; but most of these stays were extremely short periods in between campaigns.³⁴ Their relative absence from the *urbs Roma* had an impact on imperial representation and the style of imperial government but also on appointments, building policies, and religious practices. First of all, there were not many triumphs. Nor were many triumphal arches and other victory monuments erected. To mention the two most deserved triumphs, in 274 there was the great *triumphus* of the emperor Aurelian, and Probus had his triumph in 281, after his victories in Gaul.³⁵ Secondly, between the Severan emperors and Diocletian not many prestigious buildings in Rome were financed by emperors, the most spectacular exception being Aurelian's wall. Furthermore careers of jurists and bureaucrats who mainly functioned in Rome were influenced by the emperor's absence from the city. After about 240 the entourage of the emperors was progressively dominated by military and logistical specialists.³⁶ The senate did better: after about 230 it expanded its power in Rome because emperors were not often present there.³⁷ Emperors who were on the move from one battleground to the other could not disengage themselves from warfare and did not often dedicate themselves to legal activities. Of the rescripts from the period from 235 to 284 that we know, many were issued by Gordian III (3.72 on average per regnal year), followed by Philip (1.25), and Valerian and Gallienus (joint reign, 1.25/0.7). Of Maximinus Thrax, Decius, Gallus, Aemilianus, Gallienus (sole reign), Claudius II, Aurelian, Tacitus, Probus, and Carus/Carinus very few or virtually no rescripts have been preserved. The reason must be that they had to focus on waging wars.³⁸ New residences, lying behind or at the fronts, came to the fore: Antioch in Syria, Nicomedia, Sirmium, Milan, and Cologne or Trier, but did not yet take over the symbolic and representative functions of the city of Rome.

After about 230 the emperors could less often be present at the games in Rome. This meant that the populace of Rome, the *plebs urbana*, became less important in imperial representation. Chanting at the games still had incited Pescennius Niger, governor of Syria, to usurp imperial power, when he heard of it, but after about 230 the only way in which the urban *plebs* could exert any influence was through violent actions, either against emperors or against the soldiers of the praetorian guard and other units camping near Rome.³⁹ At least one contemporary writer was aware of the decline of the *plebs urbana* in politics. In the Roman History of Cassius Dio the urban *plebs* was already a minor factor in politics. Throughout his work, he regarded the populace of Rome as a category of little political influence. Although it was the *demos* of the very seat of the empire, it had no understanding of administrative matters or politics and had to be kept under control, just like the *demoi* of the cities in the provinces (52.30.1ff.).⁴⁰ Dio concentrated on the emperors, the senatorial aristocracy, and the soldiers. They were the powerful factors in the history of his own times, as he saw it.

Imperial absence from Rome had religious effects as well. In the third century – especially in its second half – traditional, formal, institutional religious obligations of emperorship, such as being a member of age-old priestly colleges that were bound to Rome, were no longer strictly maintained, whereas personal predilections of emperors for specific, sometimes foreign, gods remained important as ever. Before the reign of Quintillus (251) almost every emperor was head of the *pontifices* and a member of the *augures*, *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*, *epulones*, *arvales*, *sodales augustales*, and the *sodales antoniniani*. The emperors who ruled after Claudius II, however, were no longer listed as members of priestly colleges other than the *pontifices* and Geta was the last third-century emperor who belonged to the *fetiales*. Rome-based senators, on the contrary, continued to be members of the old colleges, and also in this way strengthened their position in Rome.⁴¹

5.2. Good imperial behavior and general goodwill

Contemporary authors considered the quality of the emperor quintessential for any monarchical government to be good. In 2.10.2–9 Herodian has Septimius Severus give a kind of inaugural oration, the upshot of which is that respect for imperial authority depends on the quality of the emperor. The reigns of the emperors determine the structure of the works of Cassius Dio and Herodian, and the actions of emperors dominate their narrative. A senator such as Cassius Dio expected the emperor to behave well and earn the goodwill (*eunoia*) of the population. In 52.39 Dio says:

For how can men help regarding you with affection as father and savior, when they see that you are orderly and upright in your life, successful in war though inclined to peace; when you meet them on a footing of equality, do not grow rich yourself while levying tribute on them, do not live in luxury yourself while imposing licentiousness in them, – when, instead of all this, your life in every way and manner is precisely like theirs. Therefore, since you have in your own hands a mighty means of protection, – that you never do wrong to another, – be of good courage and believe me when I tell you that you will never become the object of hatred or of conspiracy.

If no good emperor were available, one had better have none at all. In *Tacitus* 2.1–2 the author of the *Historia Augusta* describes the advantages of the fictitious *interregnum* of six months following Aurelian's death. In 2.1–2 he says:

And so the senate and people of Rome passed through an unusual and difficult situation, namely, that for six months, while a good man was being sought, the commonwealth had no emperor. What harmony there was then among the soldiers, what peace for the people, how full of weight the authority of the senate. Nowhere did any pretender arise and the judgment of the senate, the soldiers and the people of Rome guided the entire world.

This is late fourth-century language, but the author of the *Historia Augusta* may have found something to this effect in his sources.

Dio's paradigm of good imperial behavior and general acceptance among all orders in society was the emperor Marcus Aurelius. Laboring at the northern frontiers,⁴² he won his battles, his *paideia* was outstanding, and he treated senators well. In 71.34.2 Dio says that the emperor Marcus – in addition to possessing all the other virtues – ruled better than any others who had ever been in any position of power. Herodian starts his work with an elaborate eulogy of Marcus Aurelius who, even more than in Dio's work, is portrayed as the example of a good emperor. Not only did he possess all the traditional virtues and qualities of classical Greek 'mirrors of princes,' such as a good family background and an excellent education, interest in culture and philosophy, moderation, zeal, courage, and charity, but he also excelled in military prowess, competence in legal matters, and the selection of good assistants and sons-in-law (Marcus had many daughters). On his deathbed, Herodian's Marcus praises the *eunoia* (goodwill) of his subjects as the only true foundation of imperial power (1.4.4). Herodian then has all of the provinces and all classes in society mourn for Marcus' death in chorus with one voice (1.4.8), a strong sign of generally felt *eunoia*.⁴³ Implicitly, in these lines on the paradigmatic Marcus Aurelius, these two authors give us a picture of what they expect of an ideal ruler. According to Dio, such a ruler should behave well, have *paideia*, and preserve the privileges of the higher orders, in his appointment policies and otherwise. He should maintain the hierarchical social order, and uphold justice, without killing rich people at will, just for obtaining their properties. In a speech to the senators that Herodian puts into Pertinax' mouth, right at the start of the latter's reign, *aristokratia* is opposed to tyranny, and the senators are invited to join the new emperor in administering the empire.⁴⁴ Cassius Dio wanted emperors to uphold the existing social hierarchy. He loathed rulers who appointed upstarts to senatorial functions and dignities, and hated soldiers who did not stick to their rightful place in society, and usurped powers that their kind of people should not have.⁴⁵

In their slogans and images on imperial coins, third-century emperors did not correspond one-to-one to Cassius Dio's and Herodian's criteria for an ideal ruler. According to Carlos Noreña, imperial coins that propagate imperial virtues, from 193 to 284, emphasize the emperors' *aequitas*, *pietas*, *virtus*, *providentia*, *clementia*, *indulgentia*, *iustitia*, and *liberalitas*, as well as the *pudicitia* of female members of the ruling dynasties.⁴⁶ In imperial representation the five core virtues of *aequitas*, *pietas*, *virtus*, *liberalitas*, and *providentia* – i.e. equity, piety, courage/manly virtue, generosity, and forethought/care – defined the ethical profile of a good Roman emperor. Being systematically emphasized over and above other personal qualities of the emperors, these five qualities came to form a coherent set of virtues with its own internal logic.⁴⁷ Imperial coins also stress the *concordia* within the dynasties as a symbol and safeguard for concord within the empire and among the armed forces. These coin types were particularly popular with the Severan dynasty until 212 and with the emperor Philip and his family.⁴⁸ The choice of key virtues and slogans is a logical one, *aequitas* and *iustitia* having to do with

good government and administration of justice, *virtus* with a potential for success and victory, *pietas* with the support of the gods, *providentia* with good preparation and reliable logistics, and *indulgentia* and *liberalitas* with paternal generosity, all of them virtues that were important to all classes and groups in society, particularly to the military. Concord within the imperial family and among the armed forces (*concordia militum*, or *concordia exercituum*) was something the imperial system ultimately depended on.⁴⁹ From 238 to 284, however, the number of *uirtus* coins struck seems to have risen steeply. At the same time *aequitas*, which had constituted 24 per cent from AD 69 to 238, was depicted substantially less often. In the third century approximately every other coin showed the emperor as someone who would bring military glory and peace, and the image of the emperor in a cuirass became dominant on imperial coins.⁵⁰ This third-century ‘militarization’ was also visible in the attire of legionary gods. Those gods and other martial deities were represented in more military dress and with military symbols; there was a ‘militarization’ of such divine images.⁵¹ In similar ways imperial inscriptions and portraits also displayed a kind of ‘militarization.’⁵²

Together the key slogans on imperial coinage suggested that the emperors would bring peace and prosperity, and guaranteed the soldiers that they would win, and would not die from hunger or defeat. Together they related to important sources of ideological power of the day: potential for victory, acceptance by the military, divine support, dynastic stability, and goodwill ensuing from good behavior and generosity. Consciously or not, imperial propaganda tried to address needs and patterns of expectation, which were implicitly felt or openly cherished by different groups in society. They were not successful in convincing all those groups all the time. Armed forces regularly rose in rebellion, supported a usurper, or even killed their emperor because they, not receiving any reinforcements, felt frustrated at a border under pressure, or were unnecessarily losing a campaign, or were in dire straits because of hunger and disease. They had lost confidence in the emperor’s perpetual victory and care.

5.3. A permanent potential for victory

A multitude of imperial slogans postulated the perennial military superiority of the emperor, his unconquerable prowess; the tale of the empire’s eternal victory was the most powerful Roman myth. Right from the start of the Principate the most important basis of imperial authority had been military power.⁵³ According to Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, victory was overwhelmingly the commonest of reverse themes on imperial coinage at all periods of the empire, it was on victory that the power, prosperity, and authority of the empire was founded.⁵⁴ The potential for victory was seen as a divine gift, which could be bestowed upon a ruler.⁵⁵ Victoria was also a goddess, a divine personification, who had an altar and a statue in the senate’s house in Rome, which in the second half of the fourth century became a symbol of traditional, pagan Rome.⁵⁶ The perennial potential for victory of emperors was a central theme in imperial ideology, and was brought home to the population of the empire in many ways, through artwork, imperial coinage, epigraphical

texts on monuments in Rome and other places, and in a very concentrated way also by the built environment of central Rome, which influenced other parts of the empire; there was a reception of imperial art in Italy and in the provinces, already since the days of Augustus.⁵⁷ A common and traditional way to propagate imperial victories was through *imperator* titles and victorious surnames, such as Germanicus Maximus. Practically all third-century Roman emperors adopted such titles.⁵⁸

The most effective medium through which emperors could try to instill their perennial potential for victory into the hearts and minds of the population of the empire were texts and images on imperial coinage.⁵⁹ Imperial coins reached all corners of the empire, and especially the military. On imperial coins victory was not only celebrated when an actual victory had been won but was also advertised when it did not reflect recent military exploits. Victory, or rather victoriousness, had become a standard quality of emperorship, already well before the third century, and guaranteed peace and prosperity within the empire.⁶⁰ *Invictus* had become a standard part of Latin imperial titulature from Elagabalus onwards.⁶¹ Imperial military *virtus* was also displayed on the obverses of local coins, which is exceptional. No other imperial imagery was in this intensity displayed on local coinage. Perennial victory is one of very few messages from imperial coinage that is massively found on local coins, in various Greek-speaking provinces.⁶² In papyrus texts from Roman Egypt we see something similar. The epithet *anikètos* is quite common in their dating formulas.⁶³

Emperors who did not produce many *Victoria* or *Virtus* coins were either short-lived or successors designate.⁶⁴ All the other emperors who ruled between 193 and 285 struck sizeable quantities of coin types representing their military qualities and victories,⁶⁵ but in the course of the third century even more so than before. Military representation on coins was exceedingly prominent under Maximinus Thrax and Traianus Decius, for obvious reasons; but the other emperors who ruled after the Severan period issued large amounts of military coins as well. As Olivier Hekster observes, changes in the way the emperor was portrayed on coins show how the reality of emperorship was reflected in its image. He says:

Military qualities had always been an important aspect of imperial representation. *Virtus* (manly courage and military daring) and *providentia* (the foresight required to safeguard the state) together comprised a quarter of all imperial virtues as displayed on *denarii* between AD 69 and 238. *Virtus* alone accounted for 13 per cent. From 238 to 284, however, the number of *virtus* coins struck seems to have risen steeply among the coin types displaying imperial virtues. At the same time, *aequitas*, which had constituted 24 per cent from AD 69 to 238, was depicted substantially less often.⁶⁶

The images of emperors on coins were militarized as well. Militarily themed obverse types of third-century coins, especially from the periods of crisis and

recovery, featured the imperial busts clad in either a cuirass or a cuirass draped with a military cloak.⁶⁷ Militarily tinged imperial coins propagate the *virtus* and victories of the emperors, showing them in military attire or on horseback. Military coins carry images of soldiers, weaponry, *signa*, the emperor's *profectio* (departure) to the battlefield, his *adlocutio* (oration) to the troops, and his arrival back to Rome or some other place (*adventus*). The emperor's departure to the front, his speech to the troops, and his entering Rome or his headquarters again after victory were traditional highlights in picturing an emperor's campaign.⁶⁸ Such coins profess that the only way to gain victories is through the armed forces, whose loyalty was quintessential. There are direct references to the loyalty of the armed forces on imperial coinage, for example on coins celebrating *fides militum* (loyalty of the military), *fides exercitus* (loyalty of the army), *fides legionum* (loyalty of the legions), and – under Gallienus – *fides equitum* (loyalty of the cavalry) and *fides praetorianorum* (loyalty of the praetorian guard). Coin types of this kind culminate under Valerian and Gallienus. During Gallienus' sole reign they were also more specific, *i.e.* addressed to specific military units, such as the cavalry, the praetorians, or the legions. This kind of 'audience-targeting' was characteristic of coins issued at the mint of Milan, which was an important base of Gallienus' new army.⁶⁹ Very specific were the so-called legionary coins issued by Septimius Severus and Gallienus, and Decius' references to the army of Illyricum, all of them postulating and propagating the loyalty of specific units or armies.⁷⁰ The legionary coins might, however, also suggest that the emperor was backed by an empire-wide array of armed forces, and that there was *consensus militum* about his imperial position, consensus among the military forces replacing old-fashioned general goodwill. The coin-legend *concordia militum* became more important than ever. This slogan was already well-known during and after the civil wars of AD 68–69, and had always stayed in use.⁷¹ For obvious reasons, in the third century this legend and its alternative readings, such as *concordia exercitus* or *exercituum*, *concordia legionum*, and – under Gallienus – *concordia equitum*, kept recurring on imperial coinage, signifying that concord among the various military units was the basis of imperial power.⁷² As the frequency of such legends on his coinage is showing, the emperor Probus was particularly aware of this situation.⁷³

A traditional way to celebrate and propagate imperial victories in Rome was through triumphal processions. During the third century, there were not many. There were, however, also celebrations of a different kind, such as *adventus*, *quinquennalia*, or *decennalia*, which had assimilated triumphal elements, in a kind of dynamic of rituals.⁷⁴ Two decennial processions are very interesting, and when compared yield a few important indications about the development of imperial ideology.⁷⁵ In 202, having returned to Rome, Severus celebrated his first *decennalia*. In 76.1.1–3 Cassius Dio relates that on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of his coming to power Septimius Severus in Rome distributed unprecedented gifts to his praetorians and the people that received the corn dole, and presented spectacles in honor of his return to Rome, the completion of his first ten years of power, and his victories. Besides he celebrated his son

Caracalla's wedding with Plautilla, daughter of his praetorian prefect and friend Plautianus. In 3.10.1–2 Herodian tells us:

After settling matters in the East Severus grew anxious to get to Rome with his sons, who had now reached the age of manhood. The journey was completed; the administration of each territory was set in order as the circumstances dictated and a visit was made to the armies in Moesia and Pannonia. Then he was received in triumph by the Roman people with great acclamations and ceremony, and instituted religious sacrifices for them and holidays, for which he provided spectacles and public festivals; he also made a generous distribution of money and held special victory games.

Herodian is here speaking of Severus' *decennalia*, celebrated on 9 April 202. Herodian uses words such as 'received in triumph' and 'victory games,' suggesting that these decennials had a triumphal character.⁷⁶ After Severus' *decennalia* there was an impressive monumentalization of his successes. The emperor was allowed to erect a triumphal arch at a conspicuous place on the Forum Romanum, near the Curia (the senate's building). It came into being about 203, at the time of Severus' secular games.⁷⁷ In the inscription on the arch Severus and his son and co-emperor Antoninus are presented as Parthicus Arabicus and Parthicus Adiabenicus and praised *ob rem publicam restitutam imperiumque populi Romani propagatum* (on account of the restoration of the state and expansion of the empire of the Roman people) and because of their *insignes virtutes domi forisque* (outstanding courage at home and abroad).⁷⁸ The Parthian campaigns are emphasized, the restoration of the state is not forgotten, and the new dynasty is emphasized. Nothing relates to the violent elimination of Didius Iulianus in 193, Pescennius Niger in 194, and Clodius Albinus in 197, and the subsequent liquidation of their supporters among higher orders in society. Severus accepts praise and honor because of an expansion of imperial territory, victories over foreign enemies, and services rendered to the *res publica*. This message undoubtedly repeated the one that had radiated from Severus' *decennalia* procession. The words *ob imperium populi Romani propagatum* fitted in well with the permanent propaganda given out by the triumphal structures in Rome, and with long-standing patterns of expectation created by imperial representation in words and images. Severus had won his wars, expanded Roman territory, and taken a lot of booty.

In 262 the emperor Gallienus staged triumphal *decennalia* in Rome. In the preceding decade he had created a successful mobile army and defeated enemies at the Danube and Rhine frontiers. Besides, he had survived the crisis of 260–261. In *Caesares* 33.15 Aurelius Victor tells us that Gallienus organized *ludos ac festa triumphorum*, without giving a date or any details. In HA *Gallienus* 7.4–9.8, there is a more elaborate description of what is called a decennial festival. In 7.4 to 8.7 the author of the *Historia Augusta* relates that Gallienus celebrated a decennial festival with new kinds of spectacles, new varieties of parades, and the most elaborate sort of amusement. He marched to the Capitol with the senators and the equestrian order dressed in their togas, with the soldiers dressed all in white,

and with all the populace going ahead, while the slaves of almost all and the women preceded them, bearing waxen flambeaux and torches. Priests, white oxen, lambs, elephants, gladiators, pantomimists, actors, boxers, and buffoons marched along as well. In the midst was the emperor himself, wearing the triumphal toga and the tunic embroidered with palms. On each side of him were borne 500 gilded spears and 100 banners, besides those which belonged to the corporations, and the flags of auxiliaries and the statues from the sanctuaries and the standards of all the legions. There marched, furthermore, men dressed to represent foreign nations, as Goths and Sarmatians, Franks, and Persians, and no fewer than 200 paraded in a single group. The information the quoted passages are giving us does not seem to be very reliable. Gallienus' decennial procession as described in the *Historia Augusta* seems to be a compilation of the triumphal march, the Isis procession, and the New Year celebration, filled in with late fourth century anachronisms.⁷⁹ Goltz and Hartmann interpret the *Historia Augusta* story about Gallienus' decennial procession as mere fiction, but accept that there may have been a splendid celebration.⁸⁰ That Gallienus staged at least some kind of a decennial procession is indicated by imperial coins. Besides his *decennalia* are hinted at in an inscription, CIL XIV 5334 from Ostia.⁸¹ Wolfgang Kuhoff tells us that at the occasion of Gallienus' *decennalia* coins were issued that showed a catalog of virtues of the emperor, and good things he had brought and was to bring: *liberalitas, aequitas, felicitas, laetitia, libertas, pax, providentia, salus, and securitas*.⁸² At this occasion also protecting deities were presented on coins: *Iupiter conservator, Mars pacifer, Apollo Conservator, and Diana felix*. Double and quadruple gold pieces on their reverses show the words *votis decennalibus, votis X et XX*, and *SPQR optimo principi*. Kuhoff adds: 'Dennoch fehlte auch jetzt nicht der Hinweis auf die Treue der Soldaten, derer mit den Legenden *fides militum* und *fidei equitum* gedacht wurde.'⁸³ The celebration, as described in the *Historia Augusta*, is very different from Septimius Severus' *decennalia* procession. There is no emphasis on a dynasty or *domus divina*, nor on imperial wealth and material success appearing from the magnitude of handouts to the soldiers and the populace of Rome. There is no monumentalization either, there is no triumphal arch. The arch that is known as the *arcus Gallieni* in actual reality is an Augustan gate in the Servian wall, which under Gallienus was inscribed with a text dedicated to this emperor.⁸⁴ On the other hand there is presence of representatives of all kinds of people, senators, knights, military, women, and slaves.⁸⁵ This may be interpreted as a symbol of *consensus universorum*, a basis for the legitimacy of Gallienus' rule.

5.4. Dynastic claims

Roman emperorship was a dynastic system of rule, in a society that paid particular attention to kinship.⁸⁶ The choice of festivals commemorated in the *Feriale Duranum* contains feasts which to a large extent were orientated on the family of the emperors rather than on the city of Rome, or on imperial power as an abstract construct.⁸⁷ Dynastic claims as a source of ideological imperial power were

precisely as old as the Principate itself.⁸⁸ The emperors Augustus and Tiberius already emphasized their family as a guarantee of the continuity of their blissful system. In her Nijmegen dissertation of 2014 Ylva Klaassen puts it this way:

The honors voted to members of Augustus' family, such as the deceased Gaius and Lucius Caesar, Germanicus, and Drusus (son of Tiberius) give clear signs of widespread dynastic conceptions of emperorship and of the central position of the imperial family within the state and its governance; the dossier affirms that what Augustus had established was the rule not of one man but of a dynastic house – a house that had a collective identity, in which women had public roles, and a house that promoted a series of young men as potential imperial successors.⁸⁹

Klaassen points out that available evidence about honors awarded to the imperial family emphasizes the importance of the imperial *domus*, often in language reminding us of family obligations. On p. 170 she continues:

Contemporary material culture and literary production celebrate the *domus Augusta*, emphasizing the dynastic nature of succession by displaying various generations of the imperial family together. Already under Augustus, members of the emperor's family had figured prominently on monuments, for instance at Thespieae, where a group of statues seems to have represented Livia, the elder Julia with Gaius and Lucius Caesar, and Agrippa with the elder Agrippina in his arms. During Tiberius' rule, sanctuaries were created for the Julian *gens*, and statuary groups in the early years of his reign figure Tiberius together with Augustus, Livia, Drusus, and Germanicus, while the emphasis later shifts towards Drusus and his two sons.

In the eyes not only of the Roman public but also of the provincials, the stability and security of the empire were determined by the situation of the emperor's family. An emperor without children could guarantee the security of the empire only for the period of his own earthly existence. It was an obligation for a reigning emperor to provide male offspring or – if this was not possible – to find a political construction that could bring about a smooth transition of power to a qualified person.⁹⁰

In his imperial representation Septimius Severus strongly emphasized his dynastic claims and his *domus divina*. Advertising himself as a brother of Commodus,⁹¹ he pretended to carry on dynastic continuity. In his imperial representation, his wife Iulia Domna and his sons Caracalla and Geta were prominent indeed. The investiture of his son Antoninus (Caracalla, January 198) was widely advertised. Aphrodisias, a Greek city in western Asia Minor, immediately sent an embassy to congratulate the emperor, and received a response, which contained concepts and wordings such as goodwill (*eunoia*), loyalty, piety, rejoicing in the present conditions, celebrating a public festival, all-embracing peace, and defeat of the enemy, and concluded that the emperor has a *caesar* who is from

his own house. The emperor accepted Aphrodisias' contribution of 700,000 *denarii* as from loyal men.⁹²

Achim Lichtenberger makes clear that sculptures showing family groups, which had existed since the Julio-Claudian dynasty, became more important under Septimius Severus.⁹³ They represented Severus' *domus divina* and the concord typical of his family, which should foster, in an almost magical way, concord in the empire. Iulia Domna was figured with a *cornucopia*, as a harbinger of prosperity, and connected with Victoria. In imperial titulature she was frequently called mother of the armed forces, of the senate and the fatherland, of the Roman people, and of the *augusti* (Caracalla and Geta).⁹⁴ According to Michael Speidel, the title *mater castrorum*, which was borrowed from Faustina jr, had a religious connotation.⁹⁵ These titles express the wish to bind the armed forces and the senate to the imperial dynasty, in a more personal than formal way. The imperial couple was represented as father and mother of the future emperors, of the most status-high council in Roman society, and of the primary source of political and military power, the armed forces. This more personal and familial representation tallies with developments at the local level. In Greek-speaking communities forms of political language emphasized affective nature, such as love (*philia*), towards both the city and the emperors, but also family values, allowing the notables to be represented as fathers and mothers of a city.

During his joint reign with his father and the first year of his sole rule Caracalla continued Septimius' program of imperial representation, but from 212 onwards this was no longer possible or viable. After 212, not much of his dynasty being left, Caracalla had to change his representation. After the death of Geta, Caracalla's propaganda on coins became much more religious, and less dynastic.⁹⁶ After the interlude of Macrinus, Elagabalus, and Severus Alexander continued this tendency.⁹⁷ Like Caracalla, they did not have any offspring. Elagabalus seems to have married Iulia Cornelia Paula, a girl from an aristocratic Roman family, then Annia Faustina, and ultimately the Vestal Virgin Aquilia Severa.⁹⁸ They were not considered ephemeral, for they left traces in imperial as well as local coinage but they did not produce any offspring.⁹⁹ Severus Alexander's spouse Sallustia Orbiana who in 227 seems to have been relegated to Africa was mentioned on imperial coins and in inscriptions¹⁰⁰ but did not produce offspring either. The emperor's mother Mamaea was much more prominent. She was frequently honored with the emperor, on coins and monuments, and not only in Rome. About 231 an inscription found on a sizeable altar at Beuel, opposite Bonn in Germany, erected by military personnel serving in the *legio I Minervia*, was dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Mars Propugnator, Victoria, and the Salus of Severus Alexander, Mamaea, and the army, which was thus connected with the imperial family.¹⁰¹

After AD 235, up to 268, most emperors explicitly tried to propagate their dynasties. Having appointed his son Maximus *caesar*, Maximinus Thrax tried to strengthen his dynastic claims, giving the portraits of his son traits of his predecessors.¹⁰² The emperor Philip returned to the *domus divina* – propaganda of the early Severans, and placed a strong emphasis on his new dynasty. He deified

his father, an unknown sheikh from the Arabian border area; his wife Otacilia Severa and his son Philip junior were continuously represented on Philip's coins and in his inscriptions.¹⁰³ They acquired just as much honor as had the princes and princesses from the house of the Severi. The appellations of Otacilia were similar to those of Iulia Domna, Maesa, and Mamaea: *mater Augusti*, *mater castrorum*, *mater senatus*, and *mater patriae*. Mamaea and Otacilia were the only women who had borne the title *mater exercitus*.¹⁰⁴ The strong emphasis on dynastic propaganda is particularly clear on coins of 248, the year in which Philip celebrated the thousandth year of the existence of Rome with great pomp and in traditional style. Extensive series of coins were issued in all metals and denominations, with images of Philip, his wife Otacilia Severa, and his son Philip the Younger, bearing legends such as *Saeculares Augusti*, *Millenaria Augusti*, *Romae Aeternae*, *Laetitia Fundata*, and *Liberalitas III Augusti*. This particular issue of coins was the largest and most costly of Philip's entire reign.¹⁰⁵

Within Decius' representation of power the emphasis lay heavily on military representation and messages to military units in 'Illyricum.' Of the 160 or so coin types bearing Decius' portrait and titles on the obverse, 37.5 per cent present a military theme, while 35.6 per cent concentrate on 'Illyricum' and the troops that had put Decius upon the throne. Only a small percentage of Decius' coin types carry dynastic slogans and images.¹⁰⁶

Dynastic claims were coming back again in full force on the coinage of Valerian and Gallienus. In his monograph on the emperor Gallienus Michael Geiger shows that Gallienus' sons who became *caesares*, Valerian II and Saloninus successively, were represented with coin types which suggested dynastic continuity.¹⁰⁷ Extremely eloquent is a special gold coin from the mint of Cologne, one of the golden *multipla* of this dynasty, showing Salonina and Gallienus on the obverse, standing face-to-face in an attitude of concord, with the legend *Concordia Augustorum*, and Valerian I and II on the reverse, with the legend *Pietas Augustorum*.¹⁰⁸ The percentage of dynastic coin types was not high, though. During Valerian's and Gallienus' joint reign coins propagating military messages were issued on a large scale; 37.1 per cent of Gallienus' coin types from his joint reign promote a military theme, the second largest category being 'virtues.' The emphasis within the latter category lies on the militarily tinged *virtus*.¹⁰⁹ After Valerian's capture and the death of two sons Gallienus' imperial representation turned to emphasizing the protection of the gods and the emperor's own superhuman characteristics, while maintaining a strong emphasis on military messages, virtues, and golden age propaganda. During Gallienus' sole reign, coins claiming divine protection and divine associations formed the largest representational category (24.1 per cent) followed by 'virtues' (20.6 per cent), *saeculum aureum* (20.3 per cent), and military representation (19.3 per cent).¹¹⁰ After 268 dynastic propaganda was no longer prominent on imperial coinage. The coins of Aurelian's spouse Severina and those of Carus and his sons Carinus and Numerianus were no exceptions to this rule.¹¹¹ Those coins were just issued in the names of relatives of the ruling emperors, without having a specific dynastic character. To give one example, quite a few of Severina's coins carried the legend *Concordia Militum*.¹¹²

5.5. Infant emperors

Strong dynastic claims might produce children on the throne. To survive, they needed excellent, famous advisors who were supported by the armed forces. Herodian was not a supporter of child emperors. In 1.1.6 he says: 'The more mature emperors took greater care to control themselves and their subjects because of their political experience. The very young ones led rather less disciplined lives and brought in many innovations.' In Roman times, innovation was not a good thing. In 1.3.1–5, giving a series of examples from Greek and Roman history, the author eloquently describes the risks to imperial authority of youngsters on the throne who lose their self-restraint. In 5.5.1 Herodian relates that, after the demise of Macrinus, affairs in the east were dealt with by Julia Maesa and a circle of advisors because the new emperor Antoninus (Elagabalus) was young and without administrative experience or education. His dynastic claims, however, had been accepted by soldiers of the eastern army who according to Cassius Dio 78.31.4 were eager to get an excuse for an uprising against Macrinus.¹¹³ In Rome the new emperor selected unsuitable assistants and advisors, which put his position to risk. Besides, his extravagant and fanatic devotion to his sun god disappointed the military and the high administrators in Rome, and so they put Severus Alexander in his place who, though young and very much under the tutelage of his mother and grandmother, was greeted as emperor by the soldiers and conducted up to the palace.¹¹⁴ His tutors tried to surround him with good assistants.¹¹⁵ In our literary sources his main advisor, Ulpian, was praised and almost glorified, but the military did not like him and killed him after just one year.¹¹⁶ Alexander's reign was unstable. He had to cope with rebellions and unrest, and with dissatisfaction among the soldiers. So he and the people backing him had not been successful in finding sufficient compensation for his young age in selecting advisors who could win the hearts and minds of the soldiers. Besides he himself and his mother, reputedly his main tutor next to Ulpian, were accused of greed and meanness, which may have been an actual lack of means, as was argued in chapter 2.¹¹⁷

Another child on the throne was Gordian III. He was called *admodum puer* (a fairly young boy) by Eutropius (9.2.2). His dynastic claims were not strong but he was nevertheless accepted by the military forces in Rome. Through his mother he descended from the two ephemeral usurpers of 238, Gordian I and II.¹¹⁸ The soldiers must have been willing to accept any dynastic claim now, however flimsy it was, to get rid of the two senatorial emperors. Gordian's lack of age and experience was compensated by the status and experience of the senators who supported him, the so-called *vigintiviri*, and in the later years of his reign by the highly-skilled and intellectually well-educated Timesitheus who had become his father-in-law.¹¹⁹

5.6. Divine associations

One way to strengthen and legitimize imperial power was to lend it a religious character, to sacralize it. In an appendix to his book *Kaiser und Gott. Herrscherkult*

in *Römisches Reich* Manfred Clauss mentions quite a few inscriptions that attest to the fact that living Roman emperors were receiving cultic honors and were venerated as superhuman beings, the Severan emperors more so than most of their predecessors.¹²⁰ Their dynasty looms relatively large in such inscriptions. In relevant texts emperors were denoted as deities, and their *numen* or *genius* were supposed to have religious value. In the *acta* of 7 November 224 of the Arval Brethren, a hallowed priestly college in Rome, the *genius* of the ruling emperor is even put before the 20 *divi*.¹²¹ A member of the imperial dynasty could be proclaimed as a *synnaos theos* living in one temple together with another deity, and the ruling family could receive superhuman honors during imperial celebrations. Statues of emperors and other members of their dynasty were not just honorary items, but had cultic and magic significance.¹²² Through their images, emperors were present at all public actions and activities, and imperial images were places of asylum.¹²³ Dynastic family groups in stone had been put up ever since Julio-Claudian days, and had always been an important means to represent ruling families. Setting up such monuments all over the empire, the early Severans intensified this form of imperial representation, which is mirrored on local coins. Lichtenberger mentions – among others – coins from Stratonikeia in Caria, Nicopolis, and Marcianopolis in Moesia Inferior, and Pautalia in Thrace.¹²⁴ The evidence comes from the provinces, not from Rome or Italy. The reason may be that Rome was the seat of many public rituals that were connected with traditional gods as well as with imperial power. To rule out or change traditional religious practices, relations, and priorities here could provoke fierce reactions, as the emperor Elagabalus discovered to his dismay.¹²⁵ Another way to emphasize divine associations was propagating the assistance of favorite divinities. In imperial representation this was a device as old as the Principate itself. The emperors of the Severan dynasty applied it emphatically. Septimius Severus stressed his relations with Hercules and Liber Pater (a god he brought with him from North Africa), Caracalla had a predilection for Apollo, Aesculapius, and Serapis but venerated also many other divinities on his coinage, and Elagabalus dedicated himself to his Emesene sun god.¹²⁶

But what happened when emperors did not have much authority, or lost it, for example because they had not been successful in wars? Third-century emperors, like Commodus before them, accentuated their own sacral character and their relations with the supernatural to compensate for a lack of actual authority. Rulers acted as god-emperors or emperors by the grace of god, or assimilated themselves to a favorite deity.¹²⁷ Or they called one or more gods their companions or protectors (*comites* or *conservatores*). Most of the emperors who ostentatiously did so had a troubled reign and could not make obvious references to ancestral claims.¹²⁸ They could not take pride in long dynastic lines but were first- or second-generation rulers. But even emperors who could show impressive dynastic claims but did not have any real victories or other comparable achievements to boast of emphasized their divine associations. Commodus was the first emperor under whom coinage explicitly named a god (in his case Hercules) as imperial companion.¹²⁹ Commodus later even became Hercules Romanus, an incarnation of this divinity.¹³⁰ His Severan successors were more careful. Iulia

Domna, for example, was identified with gods only on provincial coinage. Going a step further than imperial coinage local coins connected or even identified Iulia Domna with Artemis, Tyche, Ceres/Demeter, and Minerva/Athena.¹³¹ In the third century, particularly during its second half, many emperors accentuated their special relations with the gods, especially with Jupiter, Mars, Hercules, Sol, and Apollo.¹³² Hercules became more important than ever during the brief reign of Aemilianus and remained prominent throughout the remainder of the third century.¹³³ Hercules was popular among the soldiers of the northern armies.

This type of religiously tinged imperial representation was extremely prominent under Gallienus, especially during his sole reign. Deities appeared on coin types struck during both joint and sole reigns. During the emperor's joint reign with his father, Valerian, both Jupiter and Apollo assumed the function of *conservator*. Out of the 16 coin types referring to Jupiter, nine present Jupiter as *conservator*, whereas among the 16 types showing Apollo, 13 display Apollo as the emperor's *conservator*.¹³⁴ Other deities represented on Gallienus' coins during the joint reign with his father were Mars (nine types), Sol (five types), and four female deities, Diana, Vesta, Iuno, and Venus. During Gallienus' sole reign more deities were added. Neptune, Minerva, Liber Pater, Aesculapius, Serapis, Hercules, Mercurius, Ianus, and Vulcanus adorn coin types minted in the period 260–268. Only Venus, Minerva, Serapis, Vesta, Ianus, and Vulcanus did not assume the function of *conservator* or *conservatrix* of the emperor. Apparently the emperor wished to represent nearly the entire classical pantheon plus several eastern and Egyptian gods on his coins, to strengthen his position amidst the many troubles of his sole reign.¹³⁵ The gods protected him, just like the emperor was the protector of the Roman world.¹³⁶ A large number of the *conservator* coins belong to the so-called 'animal series,' which consist of 32 coin types, which label particular deities as *conservatores* of the emperor and show the images of animals that symbolized those gods.¹³⁷ Gallienus also, like Commodus, identified himself with certain deities. In competition with Postumus Gallienus presented himself as a hero and savior such as Hercules, on a few bronze coins he posed as *genius populi Romani*, and on some *aurei* he even identified himself with the goddess Demeter (Lat.: Ceres).¹³⁸ These gold coins carried the legend *Gallienae Augustae* and showed the emperor with traits and attributes of Ceres on the obverse and the legends *Victoria Augusti* or *Ubique Pax* on the reverse.¹³⁹ To interpret this remarkable coin type, one should consider its numismatic context. On a gold medallion from the mint of Rome the same legend *Ubique Pax*, with a *Victoria* in a biga galloping left (reverse), was combined with an obverse carrying the legend *Conservatori Orbis*, with an image of Gallienus crowned with reeds,¹⁴⁰ not so different from the image on the *Gallienae Augustae* obverse. This suggests that on the latter coin type the goddess of cereals is portrayed as typically Gallienic, characteristic of this emperor's reign and with a promise of all-encompassing peace and abundance. On the gold medallion Gallienus is propagated as the *conservator* of the empire, which fits in well with Gallienic representation,¹⁴¹ and with victory and ensuing peace. The *Gallienae Augustae* coins may indicate that the emperor identified himself in an androgynous way with genderless divinity but may as well point at the

combination of victory, omnipresent peace and an abundance of food through the emperor's special relation with Ceres.

Gallienus was also celebrated as a pious, brave, merciful, and thereby unconquerable, emperor. In ILS 548 we read: 'Gallieno clementissimo principi, cuius invicta virtus sola pietate superata est (to the most merciful *princeps* Gallienus, whose unconquerable courage is only surpassed by his piety).' In ILS 549 it is written: 'domini nostri Gallieni invicti Augusti, qua universum orbem suum defendit ac protegit [of our invincible lord Augustus Gallienus, through which he defends and protects his world].' In ILS 550 we find: 'Invicto imperatori pio felici Gallieno Augusto, dis animo voltuque compari [to the unconquerable god-fearing and successful emperor Gallienus who is like the gods in his mind and countenance].' No wonder that Gallienus' portraits became ever more religiously inspired and hieratic.¹⁴² In this way Gallienus sought compensation for his awkward, disputed position and his lack of actual power in various corners of the empire. He did this in a personal way, comparing himself as a person with the gods and personally receiving their support, just as he bound his middle cadre officers in a personal way to himself through appointing them *protectores*. In Gallienus' imperial representation *salus publica* was in a personal way connected with *salus principis*.¹⁴³

There were other ways to seek religious compensation for an unstable position of power. It seems that the emperor Aurelian, having at his hands a military sedition, once said to his soldiers that it was god, not they, who determined who was to become emperor and for how long.¹⁴⁴ This is emperorship by the grace of god. Aurelian combined it with a predilection for the unconquerable sun god, Sol Invictus, for whom he built a huge temple in Rome because the sun god had assisted him in one of his battles. Mentioning Emesa and its sun cult, the author of the *Historia Augusta* connects Aurelian's veneration for Sol Invictus with the favorite deity of the emperor Elagabalus (HA *Aurelianus* 25.4). It is not certain that this is right. Aurelian's sun cult may have been more general, not specifically directed to the god of Emesa. To the new temple in Rome Aurelian allotted a college of *pontifices* and funds for making repairs and paying attendants. In this way he became a forerunner of Constantine the Great and his tale of God helping him in battle.¹⁴⁵ In our sources there is not any explicit indication that Aurelian was drawing near, however, to Constantine's Eusebian ideology of one god reigning the cosmos and his counterpart, the emperor, ruling the one earthly empire.¹⁴⁶

Yet another way to involve higher powers in the struggles of the empire was uniting the inhabitants of the empire in a supplication to the gods. In 212 Caracalla did so in a spectacular way, giving Roman citizenship to all free inhabitants of the empire first, in order to have them united in prayer as one huge body of citizens. In 250 the emperor Decius even constrained people to unite in sacrificing to the gods through a formal edict, which put him into conflict with Christianity.¹⁴⁷ Those *supplicationes* did not have any future. Gallienus and the soldier-emperors who succeeded him returned to more common divine associations.

In conclusion. Did divine association compensate for eroding actual imperial authority? The answer must be no. Emperors who lost battles, did not have

any proven potential for victory, did not bring prosperity and safety, and did not have much logistical and administrative experience, nor long dynastic lines, had not much chance to survive nor to hand over their position to a next generation. They were vulnerable to usurpations. Neither Elagabalus nor Gallienus were in the end helped out by the divine associations in their imperial representation. If the entire population of the empire, or at least all of their soldiers and the larger part of their citizens had shared with them a strong specific religious conviction, and had in this way entered common religious ground with their rulers, it could have been otherwise.

Notes

- 1 This is one of the main points made by Ando 2000.
- 2 As argued in De Blois 1998, 3413, 3416; idem 1998–1999, 272.
- 3 In Kolb 2006, 58, Ted Lendon mentions imperial coin types, imperial art, imperial building, imperial inscriptions, imperial cultivation of the urban plebs, imperial cult, imperial wars of conquest, provincial panegyric to emperors, provincial raising of statues of emperors, poetry praising emperors. See Cordovana 2007, 283–462 (on ‘immagini e simboli del potere’).
- 4 Ando 2000, 214f.
- 5 Commodus’ statues were destroyed the day after he was killed; see HA Pertinax 6.3. In Thysdrus in 238 people who had started to rebel against Maximinus Thrax immediately attacked his statues. See HA Gordiani 9.3. Something similar happened in Rome. See HA *Gordiani tres* 13.6.
- 6 To quote De Jong in De Blois *et al.* 2006, 241.
- 7 See Van Nijf in Cooley 2000, 21–36; idem in Van Nijf and Alston 2010, 215–42.
- 8 On religious and other public imagery in dreams see Lane Fox 1986, 150–66.
- 9 Chaniotis in Cairns and Nelis 2017, 144–54.
- 10 See Manders 2012, 29–37.
- 11 In St. Matthew 22, 19–21 Jesus says to some Pharisees: ‘show me the tribute money. And they brought him a *denarius*. And he said unto them, whose is this image and superscription? They said unto him, *Caesar’s*. Then he said unto them, render therefore unto *caesar* the things which are *Caesar’s*, and unto God the things that are God’s.’
- 12 See Hekster in De Blois *et al.* 2003, 20–33 and Manders 2012, 36f. See Hekster and Manders in Johnes *et al.* 2006, 136.
- 13 Manders in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 285–90. Cf. Manders and Hekster 2011, 158. For a more detailed and elaborate analysis see Manders 2012, 38–53.
- 14 See De Blois 1976, 201. On this competition between Gallienus and Postumus see Grandvallet in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 337–51.
- 15 See above, ch. 3, p. 162.
- 16 On rescripts and imperial messages see Ando 2000, 73–273 (on consensus and communication within the empire, between rulers and ruled). On p. 362 he observes that the emperors flooded the empire with legislation and administrative acts of various kinds. See Liebs in Kolb 2006, 137–52. On p. 152 he concludes that the production of *libelli* increased from Hadrian’s rule onwards, reached a summit under Septimius Severus, and remained important until about 250.
- 17 See Herrmann 1990, 64.
- 18 See Ando 2000, 98.
- 19 P. Dura 54. See Hekster 2008, 66 and 127–9 (translation into English).
- 20 See Pollard 2000, 49–52.

- 21 See Kaizer in Rüpke 2007, 449f.
- 22 Leander Touati 1991, 117–31; Mennen in De Blois *et al.* 2006, 258.
- 23 See Manders 2012, 225–52.
- 24 Mennen in De Blois *et al.* 2006, 263–7; Manders 2012, appendix 4, pp. 324–8; De Blois 2014b, 1016f.
- 25 See Felletti-Maj 1958; Wiggers and Wegner in Wegner 1971; Wood 1981, *idem* 1986. Cf. Smith 1997, 179.
- 26 See Peachin in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 75–93.
- 27 The images of imperial power and success amounted to a kind of schooling the audiences. According to Sturken and Cartwright 2001, 10–14, looking and perceiving involve learning to interpret relationships of power.
- 28 See De Blois 1998, 3429–31.
- 29 A. Gangloff, *Pouvoir impérial et vertus politiques. L'évolution de la figure du bon prince sous le Haut-Empire*, forthcoming.
- 30 He did not play his role rightly and failed to convince his subjects. His advisors clearly chose the wrong strategy to 'sell' this youthful ruler (Icks in Turner *et al.* 2010, 331–41).
- 31 See above, ch. 2, pp. 56–61.
- 32 See De Blois 1989, 79f.; *idem* 1994, 172f.; Hahn in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 411f.; Geiger 2013, 271–3. Gallienus' project may very well have been in consonance with an important third-century development. In his article in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 397–412, Hahn demonstrates that by then a main tendency among philosophers in the third century was to move away from ethics, from the *ars vitae*, towards retiring from society, the *vita contemplativa*.
- 33 See Hölscher in Goldbeck and Wienand 2017, 285–305.
- 34 Manders and Hekster 2011, 156f.
- 35 See HA *Aurelianus* 33–4 and HA *Probus* 19.1–8. See Watson 1999, 178f. and Haake in Goldbeck and Wienand 2017, 373–5.
- 36 See above, ch. 4, p. 194.
- 37 See above, ch. 4, pp. 197f.
- 38 See Sirks in Babusiaux and Kolb 2015, 36f., 45. Cf. Duncan-Jones 2004, 48f. He concludes that legislative activity as visible in *CJ* was impressively high under Gordian III, but fell dramatically under Philip and his short-lived successors. Under Valerian there was a partial revival but after 260 there was a blackout until Diocletian. Boudewijn Sirks stipulates that our knowledge of jurisdiction and legislation during the 50 or so years from 235 to 284 is almost exclusively dependent on rescripts (*ibidem*, 32–40).
- 39 See ch. 2, pp. 40, 60, 151.
- 40 See De Blois 1997, 2655–60; *idem* 1998, 3410f.
- 41 See Rüpke 2005, 393–484, esp. 466ff. See Manders 2012, 138f. The emperor Aurelian did not become member of the traditional Rome-bound colleges but introduced a new kind of *pontifices* of the god to whom he had dedicated himself, Sol Invictus.
- 42 Cassius Dio 71.3.1. On Marcus' battles see 71.3–21; 33–34. In 71.36.3 Dio admires Marcus because he was able to save himself and preserve the empire, in spite of the fact that he was not strong in body. On Marcus' reign and personality see Birley 1993²; Van Ackeren 2012.
- 43 See Herodian 1.2. See De Blois 1998, 3416.
- 44 Herodian 2.3.10.
- 45 See the so-called speech of Maecenas, Dio 52.19–39. See De Blois 1998, 3406–12. At the end of the fourth century the author of the *Historia Augusta* cherished similar ideas. See Alföldy 1978, 48: 'Die römische Welt war für den Autor der HA nicht nur ein politisches System der kaiserlichen Herrschaft, auch nicht nur eine auf religiösen Ideen, intellektuellen Leistungen und Ethik beruhende geistige Wirklichkeit, sondern auch ein soziales Gefüge mit eine beinahe als heilig empfundene hierarchischen Ordnung.'

- 46 In English: equity, piety, courage/manly virtue, forethought/care, clemency, indulgence, justice, and liberality or generosity. See Noreña 2001, 146–65; idem 2011, 37–100; Manders 2012, 46, 158–85. These virtues were also emphasized in epigraphical texts about recurring issues, which strengthened their schooling effect. An example. In ILS 432 we read: ‘imp(eratori) caesari L. Septimio Severo Pio Pertinaci Aug(usto) Arabic(o) Adiab(enico) Parthic(o) max(imo) Britt(annico) max(im)o, tr(ibunicia) pot(estate) XVIII, imp(eratori) XII, co(n)s(uli) III, p(atr)i p(atriae), caelesti eius indulgentia in aeternum securitatem adque gloriam iure aequo foederis sibi confirmato, Camertes p.p.’ (Camerinum in Italy, AD 210).
- 47 Noreña 2011, 99.
- 48 See Noreña 2011, 132–5. See RIC IV 1, 123 nr. 255, 130 nr. 312, 133 nr. 330a, 202 nr. 814 (*Concordia Augustorum*, with images of Septimius Severus, Geta, and Caracalla, in all metals, gold, silver, and bronze); 218 nr. 36, (*Concordiae aeternae*, gold coin with images of Caracalla [obverse], Septimius Severus, and Iulia Domna [reverse]); 221 nrs 59a–61 plus 231 nrs 125ab (*Concordiae aeternae*; nrs 59a–c and 60 gold coins with Caracalla and his wife Plautilla, nr. 61 a gold coin with Caracalla and Geta, and nrs 125ab silver coins with Caracalla and Plautilla); 231 nrs 123f., gold and silver coins (*Concordia felix*, with Caracalla and Plautilla); RIC IV 3, Philip and his dynasty, 81 nrs 109f., 83 nrs 119ab and 125, 84 nr. 129, 86 nr. 143, 94 nrs 203a–g and 204 (*Concordia Augustorum*, in all metals, gold, silver, and bronze); RIC IV 3, Decius and the members of his dynasty, 123 nr. 31 and 137 nr. 131 (*Concordia Augustorum*, silver and bronze coins).
- 49 See above, p. 46.
- 50 See Manders and Hekster 2011, 158f. See Hekster 2008, 59.
- 51 Stoll in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 455ff. On depicting the military in funerary art see Coulston in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 529–61. The sculptures became more homogeneous in terms of equipment, and quantitatively mirrored which armies were most important.
- 52 See Christol in Quet 2006, 123f. On p. 124 he says: ‘Un net changement de ton est perceptible dans l’épigraphie impériale. Il se traduit par la mise en valeur vigoureuse des capacités militaires du prince en rapport avec les nouvelles exigences qui s’imposaient au gouvernement de l’état.’ On p. 127 he refers to ‘la multiplication des portraits impériaux accompagnés d’attributs militaires.’ Cf. Grandvallet in Quet 2006, 133–48, esp. 144 (militarization of imperial images in times of crisis).
- 53 See Eck in Hekster *et al.* 2009, 220f.
- 54 Wallace-Hadrill 1986, 69.
- 55 Manders 2012, 77f., referring to Fears 1981, 736–826, esp. 743, 745. Cf. Ando 2000, 278–92.
- 56 Der kleine Pauly 1263f. On the goddess Victoria see Hölscher 1967; Ando 2000, 280f.
- 57 See Ando 2000, 253–9, 303–13. On artwork propagating imperial victory see Lee 2007, 42–7. On p. 42 he speaks of a range of artistic representations associating the emperor with victory still being extant nowadays, and on p 45–8 he pays attention to a range of artwork accessible to the wider public (triumphal arches, victory columns, statues, imperial portraits, and imperial coins, which had the widest distribution of any medium). A peculiar way to show the emperor’s victories was to put up paintings of them in Rome. In 7.2.8 Herodian tells us that Maximinus Thrax sent pictures of his battles in Germany to Rome together with the messages of his victories.
- 58 On these victory titles see Kienast 2004, 156–261 *passim*. See also Kreucher 2003, 75–89 (*Siegesbeinamen* of Tacitus, Florianus, and Probus). Between April 193 and February 206 Septimius Severus took thirteen *imperator* titles, and the epithets Parthicus, Arabicus, Adiabenicus, and Britannicus Maximus. Between 198 and 217 Caracalla had three or four *imperator* titles and the *cognomina* Parthicus, Britannicus,

Germanicus, Arabicus, and Adiabenicus Maximus. Severus Alexander must have had ten *imperator* titles. It is not very clear whether he took any victory epithets. Maximinus took seven *imperator* titles, and took the surnames Germanicus Maximus, Dacicus Maximus, and Sarmaticus Maximus. Gordian III as proclaimed *imperator* seven times. The emperor Philip was called Parthicus (Adiabenicus) and Persicus Maximus, and Carpicus and Germanicus Maximus. Decius may have taken two *imperator* titles and was proclaimed Dacicus and Germanicus Maximus. Valerian was called three times Germanicus Maximus and celebrated a Victoria Parthica in 257. Gallienus was proclaimed *imperator* 15 times between 253 and 268, and took five times the epithet Germanicus Maximus, was called Dacicus Maximus, and Persicus or Parthicus Maximus, and celebrated many victories (in 254 a Victoria Germanica, in 256/7 a Victoria II Germanica, in 257 a Victoria Parthica, and between 259 and 261 Victoriae VI, VII, and VIII). He may have made up victories in order to raise *aurum coronarium* from the cities he dominated. Caracalla is accused by Cassius Dio of having applied a similar device. He asked gifts from the cities as well. Claudius II was proclaimed Germanicus, Gothicus, and Parthicus Maximus. Aurelian had an impressive array of titles, being called Germanicus Maximus (271), Gothicus Maximus (272), Parthicus/Persicus Maximus (272), and Carpicus Maximus (273). Unofficially he was called Arabicus and Palmyrenicus Maximus. Postumus awarded some victory titles to himself too. He may have received the epithet Germanicus Maximus five times, and taken ten *imperator* titles. The emperor Tacitus was just proclaimed Gothicus Maximus, in 276. Probus was proclaimed Gothicus, Germanicus, and Persicus or Parthicus Maximus, and Carus Germanicus and Persicus or Parthicus Maximus in 283. His sons Carinus and Numerianus took the titles Germanicus, Persicus, and Britannicus Maximus. See also Hebblewhite 2017, 51–3.

- 59 See Noreña 2011, 77–82 (Virtus Augusti), 109, and 147–65 (victory ideology on imperial coins). See Manders 2012, 77–87 and Hebblewhite 2017, 33–43. He calls *virtus* the courage to lead (*ibidem* 34) and *victoria* an emperor's duty (*ibidem* 37).
- 60 See Ando 2000, 292f. and Manders 2012, 79. At the end of her publication on the emperor Aurelian as *restitutor orbis* and triumphator Valérie Allard says: 'On a pu constater que la thématique de l'éloge princier est double. Elle porte, d'une part, sur l'aspect militaire de l'œuvre de l'empereur guerrier (*restitutor*; *pacator*; *victoriosissimus*, *fortissimus*), et d'autre part, sur la victoire impériale comme promesse du retour à l'âge d'or.' See Allard in Quet 2006, 169.
- 61 According to Hebblewhite 2017, 39, *invictus* became a popular legend on imperial coinage in the later third century.
- 62 See Waddington 1904/1912, 272–639; *idem* 1925, 45, 95, 161; Ziegler 1993, 272–5, 288, 317; Emmeth 2001, 123–206; Butcher 2004, 380–473 (catalog).
- 63 On the epithet *anikētos* in imperial titulature in papyrus texts in the third century AD see De Jong 2006, 107–10 and De Jong in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 311–26.
- 64 Think of Pertinax, Didius Iulianus, Diadumenianus, and Saloninus. However, Pertinax may have chosen deliberately not to propitiate the military through his coin types. To make clear that such coins were really propagating military virtue and victory, soldiers were often depicted on their reverses.
- 65 See Manders 2012, 65, fig. 17.
- 66 Hekster 2008, 58, referring to Noreña 2001, 156 and Hekster and Manders in Johnes 2006, 138f. Cf. Hekster in De Blois and Lo Cascio 2007, 95.
- 67 Hebblewhite 2017, 39.
- 68 See Manders 2012, 70–7.
- 69 For imperial coins carrying such *legenda* see Kuhoff 1979, 52f. See RIC V 1, Valerian, 38 nr. 6 (*antoninianus*); 41 nrs 35f. (*aurei* from the mint of Rome); 45 nrs 89f. (*antoniniani* from the mint of Rome); 51 nrs 160f. (*sestertii*); RIC V 1, Gallienus (joint reign) 69 nrs. 11–16 (*antoniniani*); 77 nr. 108 (gold medallion from the mint of

- Rome), 80 nr. 137 (*antoninianus* from the mint of Rome), and 88 nrs 267f. (*aes*); RIC V 1, Gallienus (sole reign), 131 nrs 10–12 (gold medallions from the mint of Rome); 133 nrs 33–5 (*fidei equitum*), nr. 36 (*fidei praetorianorum*), nrs 38–41 (*fides militum*) (*aurei* from the mint of Rome); 139 nr. 102 (*fides militum*) (*quinarius aureus* from the mint of Rome); 169 nrs 445f. (*fidei equitum*), 170 nr. 447 (*fides militum*) (*aurei* from the mint of Milan); 172f. nrs 475–81 (*fides militum*, *fides praetorianorum*, *fides legionum*, and *fides exercitus VIII*) (*antoniniani* from the mint of Milan, an important Gallienic military base); 181 nrs 567–71 (*fides legionum*, *fides praetorianorum* and *fides militum*) (*antoniniani* from the mint of Siscia).
- 70 See RIC IV 1, 92f., nrs. 2–17 (legionary coins of Septimius Severus, mentioning legions of the Rhine and Danube frontiers); RIC V 1, 92–7, nrs 314–72 (legionary coins of Gallienus, probably mentioning units of his new army); RIC IV 3, Decius, 134 nrs 102a–d (*exercitus Inluricus*) and nrs 103–5 (*genius exercitus Illuriciani*), and 135 nrs 117–19 (*genius exercitus Illuriciani*).
- 71 Noreña 2011, 133.
- 72 See RIC IV 1, Didius Iulianus, 15 nr. 1, 16 nr. 5f., 17 nrs 11 and 14; Septimius Severus, 104 nr. 108, 123 nr. 256, 159 nr. 502ab, 202 nr. 814; Caracalla, 245 nrs 232f., 334 nr. 135, 335 nr. 141ab; RIC IV 2, Elagabalus, 32 nr. 60; RIC IV 3, Gordian III, 21 nr. 49, 23 nr. 65, 24 nr. 75, 38 nr. 219a, 47 nr. 288. Under Gallienus more specific legends were inscribed on imperial concordia coins, such as *Concordia militum*, *Concordia exercituum* or *exercitus*, *Concordia legionum*, and *Concordia equitum*. See RIC V 1, Gallienus, 73 nr. 70, 74 nrs 71f., 80 nr. 132, 85 nr. 209, 88 nr. 265, 98 nrs 376–8, 172 nr. 472. This habit was continued by his successors. See RIC V 1, Claudius II, 211, nrs 1 and 3, 222 nrs 140–2; Quintillus, 239, nr. 1, 243f. nrs 45–8; Aurelianus, 266 nrs 10f., 268 nr. 25, 271 nrs 59f., 274 nr 75, 275 nr. 82 and nrs 86–8, 277 nrs 101–7, 278 nrs 117, 118, and 120; Tacitus, 339 nrs 129–31; Florianus, 355 nrs 57f.; 358 nr. 97; 360 nr. 116; Probus, RIC V 2, 22 nr. 23; 50 nr. 313; 52 nrs 325–42 and 345f.; 68 nrs 464f.; 69f. nrs 478–86; 73f. nrs 531–5; 87–9 nrs 649–57 and 663–8; 117 nrs 906–8. Carus and his sons did hardly issue coins carrying such *legenda*.
- 73 See RIC V 2, 22 nr. 23; 50 nr. 313; 52 nrs 325–42 plus 345f.; 68 nrs 464f.; 69f. nrs 478–86; 73f. nrs 531–5; 87–9 nrs 649–57 and 663–8; 117 nrs 906–8.
- 74 Triumphal elements entered those other processions already from the early Principate onwards. See Mittag 2009, 447–62.
- 75 On these two decennial processions see De Blois in Goldbeck and Wienand 2017, 337–55; Haake in Goldbeck and Wienand 2017, 369–72.
- 76 Whittaker 1969, 326, note 1, argues that Herodian is here speaking of Severus' *decennalia*, celebrated on 9 April 202. Herodian uses words such as 'received in triumph' and 'victory games,' suggesting that these decennials had a triumphal character.
- 77 Birley 1999, 155–60. On this arch see LTUR I (1993), 103–5 (C.R. Brilliant). Cf. Popkin 2016, 144–51.
- 78 ILS 425 = CIL VI 1033. Severus and Caracalla were called *optimi fortissimique principes*. At another prominent place, the arch of the *argentarii* near S. Giorgio in Velabro in Rome, they were called *fortissimi felicissimique principes* (ILS 426 = CIL VI 1035, AD 204).
- 79 Merten 1968, 99–100. That he allowed all of the participating soldiers to march in white clothes (*albata decursio*) is very improbable. On *albata decursio* see Speidel, M.A. 2009, 451–62. To march with the emperor, clad in white, was an exceptional honor.
- 80 Goltz and Hartmann in Johne 2008, I, 270.
- 81 CIL XIV 5334 (Ostia, Gallienus' sole reign, AD 262): 'Invicto Gallieno exsuperantissimo Augusto, protectori imperii Romani omniumque salutis ... universi cives Ostienses decennii voti compotes.' On this inscription see Christol in Quet 2006, 108–17. It was clearly made public at the time of Gallienus' *decennalia*.

- 82 In English: liberality, equity, good fortune, joy, freedom, peace, forethought/care, health, and safety.
- 83 Kuhoff 1979, 52, with photographs of these coins on pp. 52–3. On Gallienus' *decennalia* coins carrying legends such as *votis decennalibus*, *votis X*, *votis X et XX*, *vota X* with *fidei praetorianorum*, and *fides militum* or *equitum* see Göbl 2000, 67 and Manders 2012, 291, with notes 126–9.
- 84 See LTUR I, 93 (E. Rodriguez Almeida): 'Oggi viene unanimamente riconosciuto come una delle porte del recinto murario serviano, ingrandita e monumentalizzata.'
- 85 See HA *Gallienus* 8, 1. Cf. Herklotz in Johnes 2008, II, 939.
- 86 See Hekster 2015, 2–25.
- 87 To quote Hekster in Hekster *et al.* 2009, 96 and Woolf in Hekster *et al.* 2009, 251. See P. Dura 54 (*Feriale Duranum*).
- 88 See Hekster in Hekster *et al.* 2009, 96ff.
- 89 Klaassen 2014, 168f.
- 90 Herz in Rüpke 2007, 313. On the importance of a strong dynastic propaganda see Horster in Hekster *et al.* 2007, 291–309.
- 91 See CIL VI 1025 = ILS 404, Rome: *Divo Commodo / fratri / Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) L(uci) Septimi / Severi Pii / Pertinacis Aug(usti)*. See Hekster in Hekster *et al.* 2009, 109, and Hekster 2015, 210ff. In this way Septimius Severus got a lineage all the way back to Nerva.
- 92 IGBulg. 659. See Oliver 1989, nr. 217 and Ando 2000, 190.
- 93 Lichtenberger 2011, 335–51.
- 94 *Mater castrorum*, *mater senatus et patriae*, *mater populi Romani*, and *mater augusti* or *augustorum* (see Levick 2007, 41, 44, 56, 82, 91, 93f., 106, 136, 140f., 150, 152ff.). See Lichtenberger 2011, 351–65; Langford 2013, 14–112. See RIC IV 1, 168 nr. 562 (*mater augustorum*), nrs 563ab (*mater castrorum*), 169 nrs 567f. (*mater castrorum*), 208 nr. 858 (*mater augustorum s.c.*), 209 nr. 860 (*mater castrorum s.c.*), 210 nr. 879 (*mater augustorum s.c.*), nrs 880f. and 884 (*mater castrorum s.c.*).
- 95 Speidel, M.A. 2012, 127–52.
- 96 See Manders 2012, 229–32; De Blois 2014b, 1016f.
- 97 Manders 2012, 100, fig. 18. Of the sum total of Elagabalus' coin types about 28 per cent propagate a divine association, and about 32 per cent of Severus Alexander's coin types do so.
- 98 See Icks 2011, 18–34, *passim*. Cf. Kienast 2004, 173–5.
- 99 See Emmeth 2001 (Alexandria), 145 nrs 2970–85 (Iulia Paula), 148 nr. 3009 (Aquila Severa), 149, 3004–25 (Annia Faustina). See Waddington *et al.* 1904, 277, nrs 60f. (Iulia Paula, Apamea in Bithynia); 305, nrs 99–101 (Cornelia Paula, Chalcedon); 305f., nr. 102 (Annia Faustina, Chalcedon); 324f. nrs 82f. (Iulia Paula, Kios); 373, nr. 184 (Iulia Paula, Heraclea); 390, nrs 35–40 (Iulia Paula, Iuliopolis). See Waddington 1910, 471, nr. 572 (Iulia Paula, Nicaea); 553 nr. 284 (Iulia Paula, Nicomedia); 593 nrs 129f. (Iulia Paula, Prusa); 633 nrs 135f. (Iulia Cornelia Paula, Tius).
- 100 See Kienast 2004, 179.
- 101 Eck in Le Bohec 2000, 87ff. On titles and coin legends of Mamaea see Kienast 2004, 180.
- 102 See Haegemans 2010, 86–9.
- 103 See Körner 2002, 33–44. Cf. Kienast 2004, 200f. Like the earlier two Severan emperors, Philip and his house emphasized their concord on coins. See above, p. 233, n. 48.
- 104 De Blois 1978–1979, 34f.
- 105 De Blois 1978–1979, 19.
- 106 Manders 2012, 255f. Members of his dynasty were his wife Herennia Etruscilla and his two sons, Herennius Etruscus and Hostilianus. See Kienast 2004, 206f.
- 107 Geiger 2013, 204f.; cf. Hekster 2015, 159.

- 108 Göbl 2000, nr. 894 (mint of Cologne). See Geiger 2013, 208.
- 109 Manders 2012, 272f.
- 110 Manders 2012, 275.
- 111 See RIC V 1, 315–18 (Severina) and 122–203 (Carus and his sons).
- 112 RIC V 1, 315–18, nrs 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 11, 13, 18, and 20. Nr 2 is an *aureus*, the other coins are debased silver coins.
- 113 In the sources of the fourth century AD Latin literary historiography there must have been explicit doubts about his dynastic claims. In 8.22 Eutropius tells us: ‘Hic Antonini Caracallae filius *putabatur*.’
- 114 Zosimus 1.11.2. In Herodian 5.8.10 Alexander is described as young, being under the tutelage of his mother and grandmother. Alexander is called *admodum iuvenis* by Eutropius 8.23 and Orosius 7.19.4.
- 115 According to Zosimus 1.11.2, Flavianus and Chrestus were appointed *praefecti praetorio* next to Alexander in 222 because he was still young and inexperienced. This author seems to think that Ulpian was appointed to a kind of super-prefecture, superior to both other prefects. This cannot be right; see Salway 2000, 137f.
- 116 On Ulpian and his death see above, ch. 2, p. 52.
- 117 See above, ch. 2, pp. 52f.
- 118 See Kienast 2004, 195.
- 119 Kienast 2004, 197. On Timesitheus and his career see above, p. 190.
- 120 See Clauss 1999, 503ff.; Lichtenberger 2011, 320.
- 121 Acta 7–11–224, Scheid 1998, nr. 105b, ll. 12f.: ‘et ante Caesareum Genio domini n. Severi Alexandri Aug. taurum auratum; item divis numeo XX verbeces XX.’ Benoist in Quet 2006, 37 says: ‘Nous trouvons associés le génie de l’empereur et les vingt *divi* et *divae* honorés à cette date, avec une expression très précise de la hiérarchie qui place le génie de l’empereur vivant avant l’invocation des princes et princesses divinisées, l’un et les autres recevant des victimes différentes.’
- 122 Lichtenberger 2011, 320–35.
- 123 See Ando 2000, 232–9 (on the ‘power’ of imperial portraits). On imperial statues as places of asylum see Price 1986, 192f. and Elsner 1998, 57.
- 124 Lichtenberger 2011, 339. On Severan dynastic family groups in stone and on coins see idem 2011, 339–51.
- 125 See Icks 2011, 72–88; Rowan 2012, 164–218.
- 126 See Rowan 2012, 41–246. On p. 246 she speaks of the dynamism of the divine ideology employed by the Severan dynasty. Each emperor belonging to it emphasized divine sanction but the particular form this sanction took changed from reign to reign.
- 127 See Ensslin 1939, 356–61; L’Orange 1947; idem 1953; Taeger 1960, II, 394–459; Turcan 1978, esp. 1072f.; Benoist in Quet 2006, 32ff.; John in John 2008, I, 621f. (accentuating the importance of the solar cult); Manders 2012, 95–154 and 233–42 (Caracalla); Icks 2011, 61–91 (Elagabalus) On the ‘divinity’ of Commodus and his favorite protecting deities, among them Hercules, see Speidel, M.P. 1993, 109–14, and Hekster 2002, 87–136. On Gallienus’ assimilations to deities, and his *dei conservatores* or *comites* see De Blois 1976, 148–69; Manders 2012, 283–91, and Geiger 2013, 211–47, esp. 246.
- 128 Hekster 2015, 261.
- 129 Hekster 2015, 256.
- 130 Hekster 2002, 104ff. and 165f.
- 131 Lichtenberger 2011, 367–75.
- 132 See Manders 2012, 316–23 (Appendix 2: References to Jupiter, Hercules, Mars, Sol, and Apollo on imperial coin types: emperors and corresponding RIC-numbers).
- 133 See Manders 2012, 109 fig. 20 and 110. On pp. 111–12 she says: ‘The tradition of linking the emperor’s *virtus* to Hercules was introduced by Gordian III but after his reign every emperor who refers to Hercules on his coins, Claudius Gothicus

- excluded, linked his *virtus* to the invincible deified hero. This practice continued under Tetrarchic rule.' Fig. 20 shows that Aemilian more than any emperor up to Carinus emphasized Hercules on his coins.
- 134 See Manders 2012, 283 with note 66, referring to RIC V 1, nrs 76, 77 143, 189, 215–18, and 440 (Jupiter), from Gallienus' joint reign, and RIC V 1 nrs 125–7, 129, 205, 206, 251, 261–3, 374, 416, and 425 (Apollo), equally from Gallienus' joint reign.
- 135 See Manders 2012, 286f.
- 136 See CIL XIV 5334 (Ostia, Gallienus' sole reign, AD 262): 'Invicto Gallieno exsuperantissimo Augusto, protectori imperii Romani omniumque salutis ... universi cives Ostienses decennii voti compotes.'
- 137 See De Blois 1976, 160–4; Manders 2012, 287–91. Göbl 2000, 94 says: 'Diese Emission ist wohl die bekannteste des Gallienus. Die Reverse bringen ein ganzes Pantheon von Schutzgöttern des Kaisers mit zugeordneten Tieren aus Zoo und Fabel: Diana führt, gefolgt von Apollo.'
- 138 See above, ch. 2, p. 82 with n435 (competition with Postumus). See De Blois 1976, 149–59; idem 1994, 174.
- 139 RIC V 1, 136 nr. 74 (*aureus*); Göbl 2000, 92; Geiger 2013, 226 and 259f.
- 140 RIC V 1, 131 nr. 15 (gold medallion from the mint of Rome).
- 141 See above, pp. 81f.
- 142 See De Blois 1976, 170–3; Geiger 2013, 248–55.
- 143 See Michel Christol's article in Quet 2006, 107–31, esp. 116ff., where he discusses CIL XIV 5334 (Ostia, about 262): 'Invicto Gallieno exsuperantissimo Augusto, protectori imperii Romani omniumque salutis ... universi cives Ostienses decennii voti compotes.'
- 144 Anonymus Continuator Dionis FHG IV p. 197, frg 10.6.
- 145 According to the author of the *Historia Augusta*, Aurelian's connection with Sol also manifested itself at Emesa, the place where the emperor Elagabalus' favorite deity was venerated. See HA *Aurelianus* 25.4–5: 'Recepto igitur Orientis statu Emesam victor Aurelianus ingressus est ac statim ad templum Heliogabali tetendit, quasi communi officio vota soluturus. Verum illic eam formam numinis repperit quam in bello sibi faventem vidit (and so, having reduced the east to its former state, Aurelian entered Emesa as a conqueror, and at once made his way to the temple of Elagabalus [the god, not the emperor, LdB], to pay his vows as if by a duty common to all, but there he beheld that same divine form which he had seen supporting his cause in the battle).' Of course it is possible that the author of the *Historia Augusta* made up this story in analogy with the myth of Constantine the Great (*in hoc signo vinces*) but it is equally plausible that he found something in his sources. In HA *Aurelianus* 35.3 we read: 'Leges plurimas sanxit, et quidem salutare. Sacerdotia composuit. Templum Solis fundavit et pontifices roboravit; decrevit etiam emolumenta sartis tectis et ministris (He (Aurelian) enacted very many laws, and salutary ones indeed. He set the priesthoods in order, he constructed the Temple of the Sun, and he founded its college of pontiffs; and he also allotted funds for making repairs and paying attendants).' Cf. HA *Aurelianus* 39.2. See Watson 1999, 188–98 (Aurelian and Sol).
- 146 See Eusebius, *De laudibus Constantini* 16.
- 147 See ch. 2, pp. 47f. and p. 67.

6 Conclusions

Imperial power was actual reality as much as it was image and ideology. In AD 200 the images of emperor and empire were still impressive. Septimius Severus had conquered his enemies, expanded the empire, kept the loyalty of the armies, and founded a dynasty that continued the preceding Antonine house. Like all emperors before him, Severus had strong divine associations, and so did his successors. After 200 Severus presented himself in Rome, to the people, in a splendid and traditional manner. His glory was monumentalized in the Roman Forum. The empire looked strong and had reached its greatest extent. During the first three decades of the third century the Roman empire was recovering after the many wars and epidemics of the period 161–200. The image of imperial power that the new Severan dynasty exhibited was one of strength, victory, and dynastic continuity, with a strong emphasis on the imperial family, whose concord was a symbol of the unanimity within the empire. The civil wars in east and west had been violent but brief, and struggles against the Parthians and other opponents east of the Roman empire were fought outside the Roman borders and produced booty and a new province, Mesopotamia. These actual successes seemed to bear out Severan slogans. However, Severan rule was less stable than Antonine government had been. Septimius Severus and Caracalla both had to increase military pay to keep the soldiers satisfied and get better recruits, which was a fiscally hazardous policy. Caracalla had to introduce a new coin denomination, the *antoninianus*, which had less intrinsic value than its nominal value suggested. The Geta affair of 212, the violent death of Caracalla in 217, and the civil war of 218 testified to the instability of Severan rule, and so did the violent end of the emperor Elagabalus and military unrest under Severus Alexander, which arose in spite of the heightening of military pay under Septimius Severus and Caracalla. Apparently the military did not like Severus Alexander's policy of appeasement in east and west, nor his niggardly behavior towards them, which was caused by a lack of means ensuing from preceding liberality towards the soldiers. Alexander and his advisors may have wished to spare communities that alleged to have been taxed too heavily in the recent past.

The decades from 230 to 249 may be characterized as a time of onset of crisis. In the east the tremendous impact of Persian attacks became clear, and wars in Germany and the Balkans prefigured the disasters of the third quarter of the

third century. There were no more stable, enduring dynasties but imperial representation maintained Severan slogans and themes, such as perennial victory and hopes of dynastic continuity, which no longer tallied with actual reality. From 235 to 238 the limits of military effort were becoming clear. The emperor Maximinus Thrax successfully campaigned in Germany but taxed the empire to excess to get money for the extra costs, which resulted in the rebellions of 238. Gordian III and Philip had to face serious wars in the east and north as well but managed to find the necessary means without risking rebellion. They returned to issuing debased *antoniniani*, which had been in disuse since the days of Elagabalus.

A deep and dangerous military and political crisis befell the empire from 249 to 268, and caused economic and demographic distress. Wars, raids, civil strife for the throne, and other forms of unrest were omnipresent in those two decades, and Roman military superiority was even less a matter of course than during the two preceding decades. Practically all wars were taking place within Roman borders, causing widespread devastations, deportations of people, and impoverishment. Until 253 most wars had not yet coincided, but from 253 onwards simultaneous fighting in several regions became a common feature of Roman history, which forced the emperors to move legionary *vexillationes*, auxiliary units, and detachments from the fleets from one endangered area to another, in order to concentrate armies which would be large enough to beat the enemies. Even more so than in the first half of the century, military movements must have become a burden to the regions and communities that had to produce food, other commodities, and services, often without sufficient compensation. Since 252 the plague raged all over the empire, and undoubtedly took many lives again, as it had done from AD 166 onwards, particularly among mobile young men such as the military. Roman forces were no longer able to maintain the defenses of some exposed border territories that were under continuous pressure, such as Dacia and the Agri Decumates, which were given up. Large territories, especially in the Balkans, north Gaul, the Upper and Lower Danube regions, and the north and northwest of Asia Minor were ransacked repeatedly or even continuously, which seriously diminished their value as tax territories and as logistical bases of nearby border forces. Other parts of the empire, such as northern Italy and the east, were vehemently plundered on several occasions, but briefly, not continuously. Some ravaged regions had to be repopulated. The emperor Aurelian, for example, transferred the remainder of Dacia's Roman population to Thrace and Moesia, thus restoring the logistical base of the large army of the Lower Danube.¹ The nadir of the crisis was reached in 260, the year in which the emperor Valerian was defeated and taken prisoner by the Persian king Shapur I, which unleashed a series of usurpations and rebellions. The unity of the empire was at risk. From 260 to the reign of Aurelian (270–275), Postumus and his successors ruled the western provinces, and the Palmyrene prince Odaenathus and his successors, Zenobia and Vaballathus, dominated the eastern parts of the empire. The multitude of wars took many soldiers' lives. Frontier defenses must consequently have sunk to a dangerous low.

The years of the soldier-emperors who ruled after Gallienus (268–284) were a period of military recovery. The reforms of the emperor Gallienus contributed to

the empire's redress. Early in his reign, he created a new army consisting of cavalry and detachments of infantry, and this army went with him and his assistants wherever serious fighting was going on. In provinces situated in the endangered outer zones of the empire but also in some inner provinces, Gallienus replaced senatorial governors by more experienced *equites* who better knew how to fight and forage. Furthermore, appointing them to be his *protectores*, he bound the military cadres of his new army to himself in a personal, not institutional, way. Nonetheless, under his successors the empire witnessed more wars, invasions, outbreaks of civil strife, and other violence but the emperors Claudius II (268–270), Aurelian (270–275), and Probus (276–282) conquered invading enemies, defeated bandits and usurpers, and restored the unity of the empire. The emperor Carus (282–283) even successfully attacked the Persians.

After 230 the emperors were not often in the city of Rome. Instead, they marched with their armies, fought invaders and usurpers, and held residence in places such as Antioch, Sirmium, Cologne, and Milan, conveniently near threatened border regions. This meant that the political significance of the populace of Rome declined. There were no more emperors to applaud or to shout to at the games.

During the years of crisis the empire did not show much strength and superiority. Nonetheless the emperors continued traditional imperial representation and kept emphasizing their dynasties, divine associations, and perennial victoriousness. There were some experiments with a more religious foundation of imperial authority, though. The emperor Decius obligated all Roman citizens, i.e. all free inhabitants of the empire, to unite in sacrificing to the gods, which brought him into conflict with the Christians. Valerian continued this struggle. Gallienus chose another solution, and invoked the protection of a range of deities who were presented as his *conservatores* and *comites*. Besides he identified himself with several gods and even the goddess Ceres. During the years of military recovery, the emperor Aurelian dedicated himself and the empire to one specific deity, the unconquerable sun god, and told his soldiers that it was god who determined who would be the emperor, not they.²

Using Michael Mann's categories as a kind of checklist, we reach the following conclusions about the sources of Roman imperial power in the period 193–284, and about changes in the foundations of their authority under the impact of war. The sources of the fiscal and economic power of third-century Roman emperors were tax territories, imperial domains, and mines from which they obtained bullion for minting coins. The enemies who invaded the Roman empire between 249 and 284 decreased the value of important tax territories through devastations, plunder, and deportation of productive people, and so did civil wars. Besides, not only invading enemies and warring parties in civil strife took much food and many commodities without any or sufficient compensation, but so did marching Roman armies that were not sufficiently provided by imperial logistics. Fighting and foraging within the borders of the empire diminished the value of tax territories, and lowered the prosperity and productive capacity of the population of war-ravaged areas and their hinterlands. Provinces that were not hit by actual fighting did not

escape scot-free but had to pay and deliver more, to compensate for the lower yields of less happy territories. The *annona militaris* now was raised in broad territories or even in one or more provinces, not just along the military transit routes. This could only be done to limited extents, though. Many local councils came into financial problems already before the third quarter of the third century, and could not be taxed without end. The history of the year 238 shows us what the limits and risks of fiscal policies were.

A reasonable hypothesis is that during the decades of devastation and omnipresent warfare within the empire, the overall productive capacity of the empire was declining. The value of its tax territories on an average was decreasing. Increasing returns of mining and larger profits harvested from expanding imperial domains could not deliver sufficient compensation. On the contrary, many imperial domains must have come into trouble as well, and in parts of the empire mining had started to decline. The only viable compensation was to increase the volume of imperial coinage, simultaneously debasing individual coins. This combination of declining values of tax territories, decreasing returns of mining, and limited carrying capacities even of the best imperial domains eroded the fiscal and economic sources of imperial power. The debasement of the imperial coinage in the long run undermined confidence in the emperor's money. That this happened so late, under Gallienus and his successors, testifies to the strength of earlier trust in the emperor's solvency and power. Local coinage of Greek cities in the eastern half of the empire came to an end under Valerian and Gallienus, probably because the emperors needed all available bullion to increase the number of mints and issue ever more coins and medallions.

The great wars that broke out after 230 showed that Roman military superiority over the enemies in the north and east was no longer a matter of course. After 248 heavy losses and the plague diminished the force of military units. Managing the military, never an easy task, became more difficult, now that the soldiers could no longer take victory for granted and were regularly confronted with hunger, disease, and a malfunctioning of military logistics. Usurpations of imperial power, which had a military background and were not palace revolutions or conspiracies, showed military dissatisfaction and demonstrated how unstable imperial authority became in times of hazardous warfare. Good and efficient military leadership of the emperors and their staff consequently became more important than ever. Furthermore the soldiers had to be paid and fed as well as was possible, even if this would result in debasement of the imperial coinage and arbitrary requisitioning, which in their turn eroded imperial authority among the population of the empire. To prevent chaotic requisitioning as much as possible, the imperial government had to supervise tax-collecting and foraging more strictly and efficiently. Especially in threatened areas, such as border provinces, jurisdiction, general rule, and fiscal authority were united in the hands of experienced equestrian *prae-sides*. Threatened border areas came to be defended by experienced *duces* whose command stretched over more than one province, so that they could react more swiftly to changing military situations. In other regions, particularly in more peaceful inner provinces, traditional ways of provincial administration were maintained.

Some of those provinces kept being governed by senators. So the empire began to have two co-existing systems of provincial government. It seems that *caesariani* and the staffs assisting provincial governors coalesced into a personal bureaucracy of the emperors and their governors, which prefigured fourth-century imperial bureaucracies.

An important source of imperial political power had always been cooperation with the higher orders in society, *i.e.* with senators, knights, and local gentry. From Severan times onwards, and particularly after 260, senators lost career opportunities and functions in the army and the emperor's service through a process of replacement by militarily and logistically more experienced *equites*. However, senators became more influential in Italy, Rome, and perhaps some civilized inner provinces such as Africa. Nor did they lose much status. They now pursued careers that were more like the traditional high-status patrician careers. The nucleus of senatorial families that had come to the fore under the Severan emperors, maintained itself and thus gave some continuity to the senate in Rome. The continuity that characterized the nucleus of the 'Severan' senate probably gave some important senatorial families the chance to expand their property through clever marriage policies and combinations of legacies.

After about 240 *equites* with a military background obtained more career opportunities and became more important in the government of the empire and in the emperor's entourage, to the detriment of senators and equestrian jurists, who had been paramount at court under the Severan emperors. Gallienus tried to bind the most important members of his staff and of the middle and higher cadres of his new army, in a personal way to himself and probably gave them medallions and coins that were better than the average imperial coinage of his days; but there are no indications that his successors continued this policy.

The curial order had to sustain heavy burdens, and no longer had sufficient means to finance prestigious buildings, the more so because many communities had to withstand plundering bands and build fortifications. Some local governments had to accept interference by *curatores rei publicae* who put their finances to order again. Local people who in a kind of self-help opposed invading bands thus integrated themselves more than before into the Roman imperial system, which strengthened the imperial base of power. Such volunteering local militias saw themselves as allies of the emperor, not just as his subjects. The Roman empire they helped to defend was *their* empire. Accepting their help, the emperors may have suffered a partial loss of their monopoly of violence but gained more support at the local level. This was important, for local networks remained as ever the mainstay of imperial authority at the lower level of government and fund-raising. There was no mature bureaucracy which could take over their tasks. Besides many officers were still recruited among the local gentry, in the third century as before.

The upshot is that traditional sources of Roman imperial power, such as taxes, mining, the exploitation of imperial domains, co-operation with the higher orders in society, and military superiority were becoming weaker, especially after 230, and that the emperors reacted by military reforms, more military efforts, a tightening of control over tax-paying communities, and more intensive requisitioning

of food and commodities. Did those changes undermine imperial authority, or did they instead strengthen the basis of imperial economic, political, and military power? Debasement of the imperial coinage and exploitation of imperial domains temporarily solved acute shortages of money and commodities to pay the soldiers with but did not compensate for an actual decline of mining and a decreasing value of tax territories. Gallienus' military power was certainly strengthened by his military reforms, and so was the military power of his successors. The expulsion of senators from the armed forces and the substitution of senators by equestrian *praesides* in provincial administration, and the appointment of *duces* commanding forces in more than one province, brought more militarily and logistically experienced men to the fore in the center of imperial power, but undoubtedly estranged many senators from the emperors. High social status and high *paideia* no longer inevitably coincided with the ability to exercise power in the Roman empire. The discourse between cultured rulers, aristocrats, and intellectuals, which had produced the main ideas about good emperors and good imperial behavior during the second century and the first half of the third, became less prominent.

At provincial levels, a growing awareness of the risks the empire was facing and an ensuing self-identification with the empire must have strengthened the basis of political imperial power in war-ridden areas. The combination of judicial and fiscal tasks in the hands of the new provincial *praesides* and the development of a more homogeneous apparatus may have facilitated the raising of taxes and other contributions but created a new bureaucratic layer, which could line its own pockets, and gave local notables the opportunity to flee to it and thus enlarge their power, which would give them the chance to evade local obligations. There is no reason to conclude that a more widespread loyalty to the empire and a better organized provincial administration compensated for weakening sources of economic, fiscal, and military power, and thus laid a new foundation for a stronger political power of the emperors. Continuously recurring usurpations of imperial power suggest otherwise.

Eroding bases of ideological imperial power were a real problem. Third-century emperors did not constantly win their battles and visibly lacked a permanent potential for victory, which had been the strongest source of their ideological power. Nor did the emperors who ruled during and after the third-century crisis find an effective new ideological foundation for their power. In spite of the unstable character of their dynasties, which lasted just one or two generations, and were put at risk by recurring usurpations, many of them continued to emphasize the continuity of their dynasty and the ensuing happiness and concord. Their manifold divine associations either had a too traditional, common-place character or were too much the product of a personal predilection to impress high percentages of the military and the population at large, and so did not compensate for a lack of military success and a dependency on the armed forces. On the contrary, *concordia militum*, concord among the soldiers, took the place of general *eunoia* as an important source of imperial authority, and the weakening of the bonds between emperors, the city of Rome, its populace, and habits and rites that

were typically connected with the *urbs*, made the emperors even more dependent on the one remaining source of military and political power, the military forces. The political and military crisis of the years 249–268 had weakened and narrowed the ideological foundations of imperial power. The emperors who ruled after 268 had the good luck of conquering their enemies but in the long run only a thoroughgoing change of imperial ideology, connected with empire-wide mental structures or generally shared religious convictions, could decrease a risky imperial dependency on personal military virtue and success.

Notes

- 1 The influx of those settlers brought more people to the production of food and other commodities in the direct hinterland of the Lower Danube army.
- 2 Anonymus Continuator Dionis FHG IV p. 197, frg 10.6.

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